

# libertarian struggle



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# THE NEW LAW FOR THE RICH

The Heath Government's new Bill has been introduced as one concerned with lower paid workers and pensioners. A Bill which will keep prices steady and promote the Nation's growth by its control of inflation. It has been welcomed by most industrialists, yet the Trade Union leaders eventually came out against it. Why?

## The law for the Rich

The pay increase limit is across the board. The Confederation of British Industry has complained that this will 'bear down more heavily on staff and managers above the £5,000 a year bracket (£100 plus, a week), and most of the big National papers have been quick to point out that limits on pay are imposed on management and workers alike.

Less has been made of the fact that while prices and pay will be under the new Price Commission and Pay Board, in the case of rents and dividends, control will be by Ministers (who will no doubt be able to appreciate keenly the unavoidable nature of many rent and dividend increases). Dividends are to be limited to 5% increases on the previous year. Apart from the fact that there are very numerous exceptions to this clause, this is not as 'fair' as it first appears. An investor does not lose any money above that 5%, as it is just added to the rest of his investment, to increase his next dividends, and all of it can be paid off at the end of the freeze. Wage-earners denied any increase will be getting the same pay at the end of the freeze, only it won't buy as much.

Even a minor clause such as the one exempting increases in goods sold second hand and in auctions gives more to those that have. When currency is unstable, and markets shaky, the rich re-discover their love of art - they invest in antiques and paintings. There were rumours re-

cently of a levelling off in the house price boom, they appear to have been unfounded. The growing tendency to auction houses will no doubt be encouraged by this particular clause.

There is a clause in the Appendices to the Bill which has not been mentioned in the National Press. It reads, 'the policy applies to all other employment incomes... save for re-imbursement allowances in respect of expenses necessarily incurred in the course of employment'. You might think a few business lunches were all that was meant here, but in 1972 Trust Houses Forte paid for half the cost of Sir Charles Forte's Berkshire pheasant shoot, to the tune of £9,500 a year, as a 'business expense'. Add to that the other perks such as 'necessary' town apartments, business trips, public school fees for the children of top paid directors, chauffeur driven limousines, and non-contributory 'top hat' pension schemes.

Profit margins are limited to the average of the best two of the previous five years. This is obviously biased towards those who are compared to pay regulations based on the previous day's wage, without overtime. Presumably to encourage our balance of payments, profit mar-



WE MUST ALL MAKE SACRIFICES.

gins on overseas exports are unlimited. From the profits, managers salaries, business expenses, and dividends are paid. The workers who produce those exports are, of course subject to the usual pay increase limit.

Business rents are to be frozen, for these 'enter into the costs of many goods and services', but the policy on house rents is of phased increases towards 'Fair Rents'. In other words, house rents will increase but the pay limit will mean this will be at the expense of other things in the household budget, like food, clothing, etc. Business rents are frozen so that the profit margins of businesses will not be eaten into.

In case these points weren't 'fair' enough on the rich, the Sunday Times Business News (21.1.73) comforts them by pointing out that 'in the long term... the outlook... for shares is magnificent', 'the policy is designed to hold prices, not penalise profits'. The definition of profit margin 'opens a whole sleveful of loopholes to the bright finance director', and finally, 'boom-time companies which face turning in margins higher than they can justify have escape routes open'.

## The law for the Poor

The Pay Board has the power to set in motion imposition of unlimited fines on anyone who even threatens any kind of industrial action, to gain an increase over £250 a year (about £5 a year before tax). A precedent has already been set however, the miners, gasworkers, etc. have been offered the lower alternative of the £1 plus 4% increase, which works out at about £3 a week, before tax. Of course, if the management refuse to enter negotiations, or refuse a particular demand, there is nothing the workers will be able to do legally to press the higher claim.

The National Press has also omitted to mention that improvements in 'other terms and conditions of employment' are included in the limitations, and are to be negotiated as alternatives to a straight pay increase. This looks as if any kind of industrial action over conditions would be illegal, if the cost was greater than the limit.

Rent increases have been mentioned. We have the consolation that Exchange contri-

bution, will 'keep the average increase in rates down to a level consistent with the need to control inflation'. But further in the same clause, our confidence is shaken by the promise that '...where rate demands appear to be at an unnecessarily high level they reserve the right to call in the local authority concerned and require them to reconsider their proposal' (Emphasis added). Confidence evaporates completely when faced with the Sunday Times article (21.1.73) 'Why Rates will still soar', which explains that increases of 20-25% are expected in the Northern industrial cities in the next two months.

No shopper needs to be told that the increase in food prices is going to continue. We are not boycotting foods as a point of principle, but because we haven't got the money. Offal and cuts of meat that haven't been seen for years are appearing in butchers' shops as an indication both in the fall in the standard of living and of the probable level of malnutrition in the future. Rickets, a deficiency disease, never died out in Glasgow, and is on the increase again.

The Bill lays down that in cases other than the specific exemptions, manufacturers will not be allowed to increase prices, 'except to the extent that they have to meet unavoidable cost increases'. It is to be hoped that this will prevent another firm doing what Whitbread managed on December 12th: last year, during phase 1 of the freeze, they demanded an increase in beer prices as 'costs continue to rise at a rate which cannot be absorbed by increasing productivity'. The rise of 21% in pre-tax profits was never pointed out. Of course, Whitbreads do contribute to Tory party funds...

Much has been said about the Bill's 'generosity' to the lower paid. The Tories have even been called Socialist because of it! In the whole Bill, appendices and all, there is no statement of action to be enforced on their behalf, the Prime Minister 'hopes', and when it comes down to it that's all he's prepared to do. The limit on pay could have been declared as being just a percentage, and the fact that it has been laid down as '£1 plus 4%' allows Heath to claim he has the interests of the lower paid at heart. This means that such workers could be up to £1 a week better off than they would be under a solely percentage based limit. It does not mean either that they will actually get

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## ABOUT 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE'

This paper is written and produced by people all over the country, who are active in their trade unions, tenants' associations, claimants' unions, women's liberation groups, schools and universities.

We are united by our membership of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists - a democratically organised group which believes in a socialist revolution, but a revolution brought about, and firmly controlled, by the majority of the working people. We work to encourage contacts and understanding between the different aspects of working class struggle.

We oppose all groups and parties who take the initiative and control of their struggle from ordinary people. We think that the way forward to a better society is not through any kind of 'new' leadership, but through working people discovering their own history, their own ability to organise themselves, their confidence in themselves and their mates.

We are producing this paper (none of us are professional journalists) to provide one means of spreading some hidden facts, of publicising what workers are thinking and doing, to workers in other industries and other parts of the country, to talk about what claimants, women, immigrants, pensioners and schoolkids are doing, and how these battles can't be separated.

We won't give you the familiar crap of 'this is your paper', 'without this paper the working class is leaderless' etc. What we do say is that if you want to USE this paper - to pass on things you've learnt, to ask for help from other people, or just to make contact with others in a similar situation, then please do so. We know that lots of people have no practice at writing articles - but who needs literary genius? We promise to improve its appearance as we get more practised. The contents are up to you.

# EUROPE!

Beef prices have been much in the news, and a lot of talk about the power of the housewife floated around. Even that 'Voice of the People', the Daily Express, was on about it. But in fact it is not just beef, but all meat, that is going up. It's just that a convenient world beef shortage means beef is getting dearer, quicker.

According to the plans for our balancing with the prices inside the Common Market, we've got a five year programme to reach the level of European prices. In fact we look like making some of them in five months. Beef is not far ahead already. In December alone, manufacturers prices went up 34% because of food price rises, which we can be sure were more. And this is the tip of the iceberg. Confectionery, jam and boney manufacturers are all pushing for increases. And they aren't the only ones. The main bakers are trying to get the same; they are telling us they'll be making a loss if prices don't go up.

The talk about food prices has been a vast con. All the time we are told we've had it easy up to now, that the real price of food is the kind of prices that are paid in Common Market countries. This is simply not true. At present our prices reflect world market prices. By the time we are on a par with the other EEC members we shall be somewhere between 35 and 50% above everyone else. The Market has a simple device for ensuring this.

Take butter for example; there is a minimum price for all food entering the Common Market. Thus at present New Zealand butter costs about £460 a ton in the world market. European butter is set at a minimum of £852. Therefore New Zealand butter entering Europe is levied around £392. Now are prices going to be allowed to fall. If by chance the surplus of butter can bring its price below £787 a ton, then the EEC authorities buy up the surplus - at vast expense to us as taxpayers. At present there is a stockpile

of 330,000 tons of butter. The accumulated surplus are exported and sold at whatever price they can get. The taxpayer forks out the balance. In 1973 we will pay £120 million towards these food subsidies and British farmers will get £20 million of it. This example of protectionism on a giant scale is to safeguard high costs caused by the inefficiency of French agriculture.

Meanwhile we are being told that some industry or another has a boom just round the corner, or even under way. The simple fact is none of the European countries have solved the problem of inflation. They can't. The system is trapped in a spiral. Speculation on the money market has wreaked havoc and helped to take away much of the bosses' profit margin to restrict their elbow room. As soon as the promised boom arrives, the trade unions stake in their claim.

German steel last year faced falling profits and sales, a decline in international demand and Italian, East German and Japanese capitalists penetrating their markets. Come the end of the year, the bosses, including the beleaguered and often changing managers of Krupp, declared that things were picking up. This indeed was the general view put forward by capitalist economists. Immediately the union put in for an 11% rise and negotiated around 8%.

The reaction to these sort of facts on the Left has been opposition to entry. This simply ignores the fact British bosses no choice. If they had they wouldn't go in. The whole economy has been shaking at its foundation since the slump hit us at the beginning of the 1960s. The Commonwealth may offer lower food prices. It does not offer any protection or area of growth for the people who run the country, with their need to continually raise their level of profit - up around 13% at the end of last year on the previous year. The defeated amalgamation of Bowater-Tafelberg simply allowed a merger between Bowater and Rall. We can expect former British Fascist supporter Lord Inchausti to come up with something instead of the P & O-Bovis merger: he's been contemplating it for long enough. But this is nothing compared with the pickings offered in the Common Market, where already more than just France is 'expressing concern' at British takeovers in its industries. The British bosses have to believe they can pull it off - otherwise they will go under.

The reason for profits and sales picking up is not difficult to find. Mannesmann, a major German steel firm, sacked 1500 workers last year. The British Steel Corporation plans to dump 8000 in the next ten years. Any industry faced with falling profits tries to 'rationalise' - i.e. cut its costs. In practical terms this means thousands of men out of work.

The fight-back against redundancy brought into use a technique hitherto ignored: the occupation. This was only used to defend jobs though; not to take control. This was seen in the tragic betrayal of the UCS occupation. Despite its cloak of left phrases the 'work-in' meant following the government rep's orders and not getting paid for it. This was true of most of the occupations, even where the rank-and-file retained some control - which was definitely not the case with UCS. The occupations culminated in the great Skelmersdale farce. Here the British Steel bosses announced that, because of labour troubles, they were closing their Skelmersdale works. The condition for keeping it open was a no-strike agreement

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# IN THE WAKE OF THE STATE OFFENSIVE

Four people acquitted. Stuart Christie, Chris Bott, Kate MacLean and Angela Weir. Four sentenced to ten years imprisonment. Anna Mendelson, Hilary Creek, John Barker and Jim Greenfield.

## The Political Trial

The trial took a hundred and eleven days and cost the sum of £750,000. The State has gone to great lengths to pin its alleged case on the eight defendants. It has been estimated that three million words have been spoken in the five and a half months at the Old Bailey's No.1 Court.

From the beginning of the arrests at Amburst Rd. the defence has made it quite clear that the trial was a political one. Organised to 'get the 'Angry Brigade' and caring nothing for the evidence to establish guilt or innocence. The trial was organised on the basis of 'guilt by association'. Eight militants arrested, planted with weapons and explosives, and forced to defend themselves against this plant. The jury were offered a straight choice - believe the political police (Special Branch) or believe the defendants.

The prosecution repeatedly emphasised the fact that the eight defendants were revolutionaries in that they believed 'society would have to be overthrown by violence some time in history'. The prosecution attempted time and time again to establish not that the defendants had carried out the bombings but that, asserting them to be both 'anarchists and revolutionaries', they were capable of doing the bombings. The prosecution thought that if it could establish that the eight had the 'right political motives' their case was proved. It was a trial of the politics of the defendants. The concrete evidence was that of the police who carried out the planting, and the Home Office forensic report, subsequently demolished by experts.

## The State Case Nearly Falls

The defence of the Stoke Newington 8 was brilliantly organised in the courts. A system of taking transcripts and attendance in the gallery at court was set up, which ran throughout the trial. The defendants (3 of whom defended themselves) were consistently defied. The defendants claimed throughout that the explosives were planted by the police and, in the final analysis, the jury accepted that this was possible, because Stuart Christie was acquitted.

The way the jury prevailed for two and a half days over their decisions, showed a hesitancy to convict on the police evidence. They achieved a conclusion with a shoddy compromise. It was heard that, when they returned to ask questions on the day before coming to their decision, they were split 7-5. Finally they acquitted four of the accused

and found four guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions by majority verdicts (10-2), and their reticence to do this was summed up by the foreman of the jury:-

*'Us members of the jury would ask your lordship for leniency or clemency or whatever it is. But that is what I would ask for.'*

The Judge said that he would take this into account, and sentenced the four to 10 years apiece. The pressure in court to acquit was great but with the lack of external pressure the State nearly succeeded in its aim of gaoling all 8.

## The Politics of Defeat

The defence proved that it was a political trial. The Court became a battleground for the State's politics versus the politics of 8 militants. A battle which the defendants drew in Court, but lost outside.

Justice James could have dismissed the case but there was no pressure from outside the court to make him. The State faced little mobilisation against its attack on the 8 and James carried out his orders. To have forced an acquittal of the 8 more than just a brilliant defence in court was required. Only a large political mobilisation could have done that. The failure of the campaign to reach those proportions was the critical factor.

Very little progress was made to organise a campaign to organise the public outcry that would force the State to accept acquittal. The failure lay in the disorganised way the Libertarian Left and the Stoke Newington 8 Defence Group tried to build a campaign. A fact which the Defence Group tacitly admitted in its political statement.

The trial is now only 8 weeks away. We as the Defence Group have neither the organisation nor the energy to act as a focal point for all aspects of this campaign. Neither is this a position which is really practically viable or acceptable within a movement as diverse as ours. If other groups independently of ourselves can begin putting out their own leaflets (or reproductions of those from the Defence Group), and organising their own meetings then certainly the solidarity campaign will have considerably more impact on the trial and the movement.

and later

We stand with the Stoke Newington 8.

This trial is a crucial point in all our struggles with the ruling class. These struggles continue on many different fronts, and it may not be possible for us to come together at this point in a concrete expression of solidarity with the Stoke Newington 8.

This failure of the Defence Group brought little response from the libertarian left and other left movements. They couldn't respond to 'Conspiracy Notes' and other literature were widely circulated by the Defence group but it was not enough. They were handing out some belated tools and telling each contact to 'do it yourself'. Very few organisational initiatives were available to create the vast campaign to spring the 8. And the campaign foundered.

The weak and badly organised demonstrations that had little pre-planning or even notification were the hallmark of the campaign. The small number of people in the Defence group were overworked because they were organised.



The aspect of the campaign's failure that had more far-reaching effect was the politics of the Defence Group. They fell into the political trap of defending the terrorism of the Angry Brigade instead of defending the Stoke Newington 8. Thus implying that the 8 were guilty.

It was this principle that prevented hundreds of militants from joining in the campaign. Nearly every piece of literature coming from the Defence Group was pro-terrorist and the Defence Group adopted a pro-terrorist symbol, consisting of Men's Lib and Women's Lib fists clenching an automatic rifle. Anyone joining the campaign would inevitably have to support terrorism in one way or another, or be seen associating with it. As far back as September 1971, the main banner on a badly organised demonstration just before the trial of Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie said 'It's a lovely day for an uprising', while leaflets were handed out 'Fight back with the Angry Brigade'.

Calling for armed insurrection then, and proclaiming terrorist politics, were the worst tactics, when two comrades were denying in the court that they had committed terrorist acts.

## If you want Peace prepare for War

The basic political position of the Defence Group was expressed clearly in their pamphlet, 'If you want Peace prepare for War'. It defended terrorism and the politics of the Angry Brigade. On occasion the pamphlet apologised for some deficiencies of 'anarchy' but it still literally stuck to its guns.

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The Stoke Newington 8 were in court defending themselves, and fighting on a platform that denied terrorism as a viable or useful tactic in Britain, while the Defence Group issued a pro-terrorist manifesto.

The Defence Group claimed that the left were incredibly mystified about terrorism when in fact it was themselves that suffered from this malady. The pamphlet claimed that armed revolution always has to begin somewhere and argued that the successful violence of Cuban and Tupamaro guerrillas is a viable model today in Britain.

Under chapter headings of 'Beating Illegality Fetishism' and 'Revolutionary Criminality', the Defence Group defended terrorism and the tactics of going underground. The section of the Revolutionary Criminality chapter was a series of lessons to be put into practice now. It gave advice on hiding stolen newspaper and info away from police and said, 'don't use the phones', 'keep your mouth shut', etc. In fact it was the tactical expression of demobilisation. They failed to notice the fact that a militant must be widely known in the area in which he works and acts if progress is to be made. The cry of the pamphlet was 'Armed electric love' and 'the cops are coming'.

This campaign dragged in the worst elements of the left. One pamphlet called 'Ama-geddon Chronicle' circulated by the 'Southern Anarchist Column in training' introduced us to the 'recreational sniper's guide' in which the following statement was made:

*With a 303 rifle you can have a bolt fed mechanism or an automatic type. The bolt fed is better for psychological satisfaction.*

The campaign to free the Stoke Newington 8 was doomed in this atmosphere. The vast majority of those who wished to campaign for their release were blocked from activity because of the politics of the Defence Group.

## Terrorism and Revolutionary Struggle

Terrorism in this society, when 30% of the working class vote Tory and the rest still believe that Labour is for them, is the politics of suicide. It is the result of those with middle class backgrounds not understanding the growth of a far more effective attack on the State - the beginnings of a revolutionary working class movement, eg. the Miner's Strike, the freeing of the London dockers, the growth of 'occupational' movements - watered down a form - showing the way to workers' control.

It is isolation from this struggle that gives rise to terrorism. Frustration and impatience with the passage of events lead the terrorist to the astronomical leap ahead in time, to the period of revolutionary violence. Terrorism is substituting spectacular events for the patient and hard work that has to be done within the working class movement. To withdraw from public activity to underground isolation.

The only practical position now is to 'become partisans of working class revolutionary struggle'. Armed revolution to establish a free and just society will occur when the mass of the working people want it, not when individuals decide to set examples.

The most appalling result of this trial and the campaign is that through disorganisation and political incompetence we see four innocent people in gaol. If we do not recognise what went wrong they will not be released until their sentences have been completed.

## ORA groups & contact addresses

**Bristol:**  
Mac, 10, Whitley Road, Clifton, Bristol 8  
**Colchester:**  
Peter Newell, 'Agean', Spring Lane, Eight Ash Green, Colchester.

**Dundee:**  
Mike Malet, 1, Lynewood Place, Dundee.

**Glasgow:**  
Gordon Sykes, 32, Queen Elizabeth Square, Glasgow.

**Hull:**  
Marion McCartney, 21d, Pearson Avenue, Hull.

**Lancaster:**  
Joe Thornberry, 56, Norfolk Street, Lancaster.

**Leeds:**  
Trevor Savage, Flat 3, 35, Richmond Road, Leeds 6.

**Manchester:**  
Andrew Himelfield, 249, Manchester Road, Heywood, Lancs.

**North London:**  
Doug Durrant, 68A, Chingford Road, Walthamstow, London E.17.

**Nottingham:**  
Jim Collins, Flat 3 59, Forest Road, Nottingham.

**Sheffield:**  
Ian Neary, c/o Students Union, Sheffield 10.

**York:**  
Neil Hunt, 24, Moss Street, York.

There are also contacts in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Leicester, London Universities Federation, East London, South London, West London, Norwich, Oakham, Oxford, Plymouth, Poole, Southampton, Southend, Swansea and Wellington. If you want to be put in touch, write to the National Secretary, c/o North London group to whom all enquiries about ORA should be addressed.



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On the 17th. of March 1972 a group of workers took over their factory. At first they occupied - but a few days later they started a work-in. Soon they were producing goods regularly again - but this time under Workers' Management. Now, nearly 10 months later they are still producing a variety of goods - still under Workers' Management.

The factory, at Fakenham in Norfolk, used to be owned by Saxtons and Everards and manufactured shoe-uppers. Even though all the regular workers were women (constantly used by bosses as a farmworker labour), Saxtons and Everards decided that their profits were not big enough, so they sold their factories at Norwich and Fakenham to a Mr. Taubmann, who is believed to be a property developer who spends most of his time on Miami Beach. Taubmann's plans for the factories included kicking out a large number of workers, including all of the women at Fakenham.

So on what was supposed to be their last day at the factory, the women took over. They managed to stitch together some scraps of leather and make twenty handbags. After much searching they eventually got hold of some more leather. This had to be brought through friends and sympathisers, as the suppliers were 'unofficially' boycotting the factory, they didn't want to offend the 'tycoon from Miami' (Honour among thieves). With this leather the workers started to make skirts, coats and a whole variety of garments, most of which had to be designed or worked out by the workers themselves.

During their struggle the workers faced many problems. A lot of these problems were directly due to lack of planning. But they were determined to win. The following is a very small part of an interview with some of the workers at the factory in Fakenham, recorded by a member of ORA.

#### THE LOCAL COMMUNITY - BACKGROUND AND REACTIONS

Q. Did you get much local support?

EDNA. No. Not from around here no. Most of the support came from away, where people are far more aware. You see this is a backward area - its purposely kept so... the whole thing hinges on the agricultural workers wages in this area, and their wage is a downright disgrace! But then again the MP for this area is a farmer, they're all landowners, they purposely keep it (the wage) down. Well once the landworkers wage is kept down, you get somebody coming here and offering £2 a week more, its marvellous, honestly. All they come here for is slave labour at the minimum they can get, and they make their profits.

Q. That's because of the large 'pool' of unemployed workers...  
EDNA. ...and low paid.

Q. Somebody I interviewed in the street said that most of you had husbands bringing money into the house, why make all the fuss about keeping your jobs? What do you say to that?

NANCY. The money the husbands earn in this area doesn't keep anybody. It might... at the existence level. But the money the husbands earn is a pittance. Up to just a very short time ago a farmworker earned £14 a week, perhaps a bit more now. If you live in a council house - say somebody working on a farm lived in this house, this is £8.85 a week. What have you got left out of £14 if you've got 4 children to bring up?

Q. Were the families here helping?  
EDNA. Yes. Of course they were!

Q. What did your husband do during the occupation?

NANCY. He came down the first night and helped us to board up all the windows, and he helped me afterwards mainly by looking after things in the house, for a long, long time. For weeks and weeks I used to leave here (that's if I did get home the previous night at all) about 7am and I was lucky if I got home two nights later at about midnight.

Q. What do you say to those people who say why make all the fuss? or 'you shouldn't make a fuss' about being made redundant?

NANCY. I say to hell with them! Maybe some day they'll be made redundant, see what they feel about it then, see if they care to make a fuss about it then, or whether they'll just sit meekly down and accept it, which is what a hell of a lot of Norfolk people seem to do. Oh Hell! This is the thing that makes me raving mad, people accept so meekly... It annoys me, always has. When I was a shop steward, I insisted on regular meetings, and I was lucky to get, out of 50 people, 13 to attend a meeting... They couldn't care enough to come and see those blasted union people and listen to what they had to say or what I had to say to them. Apathy! And indifference! And 'I'm alright Jack'.

Q. How did the Fakenham people react?

NANCY. Well we were an embarrassment to them because its a nice little conservative town, and in a town like Fakenham this sort of thing has never happened before. It's interesting that in the last couple of months in one of the food factories there was a dispute, they were all women. I think it was for extra money, and they got a settlement and went back. But this has never happened in a factory in Fakenham before.

EDNA. Oh they just ignored us. I've had some laughs over that. I think its pathetic. But you certainly find out who your friends are... Well I thought it was funny. I thought to myself 'damn you lot.... we were doing something that perhaps some of them ought to have had the guts to do.



'UNITED WE STAND' - low wages and bad conditions for women and blacks must be fought by all workers. Cheap labour is a threat to all jobs. 'DIVIDED WE FALL' ....

# FAKENHAM OCCUPATION

Q. You said before that the attitude of the local community has changed. What are they like now?

EDNA. Well - we're on speaking terms now, put it that way. Now we are legalised we're back in the community.

Q. So they were mainly worried about you kicking the bosses out?  
EDNA. Oh yes, of course! Well its never been done. You can't do that sort of thing!

#### THE UNIONS & THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY.

Q. What did the union do when you asked them for support?

EDNA. Well the union called us 'a silly lot of girls' and told us to 'go back to the kitchen sink'.... They didn't know what to do with us.... they were embarrassed. They weren't going to pay us our out-of-work benefit at first, but then they did. We went up to the union meeting, and we just about took that one over as well (they also took over a DHSS office - see below) and that's the only time the Union doors have ever been locked, because we had a load of the Women's Liberation Movement outside, and they wouldn't let them in. They were dead scared of them getting in, and anyone who wanted to attend the meeting had to knock and be recognised. I wrote and asked for financial and moral support. And the letter I got back said they did not agree with what we were doing, they couldn't give us financial or moral support except in that they were paying us out-of-work benefit - which was £135 a week! That was the sum total of the help from the union... and that's not good enough, its just not good enough.

NANCY. I will never forget that I was one lone ASTMS member in Fakenham, and as such I was discredited. It wasn't until I rang Clive Jenkins (General Secretary of ASTMS) and said 'Look all the people at Norwich were represented at the hearing' (in St Andrews Hall when Taubmann decided he was going to keep a handful of people at Norwich and completely forget about Fakenham). So I said 'Who spoke up for me? What's my divisional officer doing?' And it wasn't until then that they sent him out to see me. He came out to see me and said 'There's nothing you can do Nancy - you close the doors - you walk out - you hand over the keys.' So I said 'Maybe you can do nothing - but I can do something.' They took the credit for the work-in, they said that they had organised it - they didn't. They backed us when we had done it.

After about a month my union did pay me dispute money. They paid me £10 a week which was quite good, although I didn't take it myself. I threw it into the fund that we had.

Q. The NUFLAT union in fact tried to stop you communicating with other branches, in an attempt to stop you getting support from other branches didn't they?

NANCY. The NUFLAT union circularised the Trades Council at Fakenham and at Norwich, and said that under no circumstances are these people to be supported. That was a rather...horrid thing to do.

EDNA. Oh yes. We were told that it was against union rules for us to contact any other branches to get support.

There's too many full-time paid executives in the unions sitting pretty with a nice £40 a week job, there for life. They're away from the shopfloor and they just haven't any idea of what's going on.

Sometimes you sit and think 'god! Is it going to pay off?' You see if you think in terms of £400 a week, it doesn't sound a lot until you come to think that at the end of the year it is going to add up to something like £30,000 that you're going to have to turn-over in order

....he's there for ever. I don't think this should be so. I think they should come up for re-election every two years, and stand or fall by what they've done for their members. But the people on the shopfloor should... demand an accounting and a very good one from their union representative.

Q. Have you heard from the unions lately?  
NANCY. My divisional officer hasn't been near me since we founded the company. EDNA. Well I'm the steward here, the branch is Norwich, and I just send in the mugs. I've not really heard anything from them. I think they've died up there. No, they can't have died they're still taking the money.

The trouble is most people aren't interested in the union, quite frankly I wasn't, but you should be. Oh they're still as dead as doornails. But we're still in the union, lets face it, you can't do anything about it if you are outside it.... You have still got to be in the union if you expect to do anything about it.

NANCY. If you have a union make sure the union works for you. Make sure the union, your union representative, who you pay, is aware not just of the facts handed out to him, he has the right to demand facts and figures, if he's a good shop steward and he knows what he is doing. You have to make sure they work for you.

Q. During the first 10 weeks, when you were not receiving any wages, you tried to claim from the DHSS, but they refused. What did you do about that?

EDNA. We took the office over. We went up and sat-in for the Friday afternoon - and that's the only time its ever closed early. Everytime they closed the section we were on. So we finally took over the main office. The point is they recognised the fact that we were unemployed because we had to go up there and sign on. They accepted our signatures but they wouldn't give us any money. So what the hell... just go up there and protest.

It's a big con, anyway. Unemployment benefit - especially by a married woman. If anyone plays a confidence trick, they'd have the law on them, but they can get away with it. A married woman pays the same stamp as a single girl, you go for unemployment, you don't get as much. It's all one big confidence trick.

Q. The workers here are not worried about the SS (racial security), or taking this sort of action, anymore?

EDNA. Not flippin' likely. The SS up there is next door to the police station - but what the Hell.

#### REORGANISATION AND THE NEW ATTITUDE TO WORK

Q. You have managed to solve most of the problems that have occurred, or that have been put in your way, haven't you?

NANCY. Yes, but we have been getting more problems than we did in the early days. Suddenly all these problems are dropped in your lap and you have to solve them yourself. For instance, at the factory in Norwich they had 3 or 4 mechanics and if you had problems on the machines, then they would send you a mechanic. And if you had problems with leather they could put that right. So, you have to find your own mechanic, you have to check with the... the tanneries, and find the places that will supply you at a realistic price. It's a hell of a responsibility.

Sometimes you sit and think 'god! Is it going to pay off?' You see if you think in terms of £400 a week, it doesn't sound a lot until you come to think that at the end of the year it is going to add up to something like £30,000 that you're going to have to turn-over in order





'UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL' - the women workers of Fakenham fight back

to keep going...But I'm convinced it can be done. In various ways. We can't do it though, at this particular stage, just manufacturing our own goods, but we can do it by keeping the contracts going and manufacturing at the same time, and one will complement the other. There's far more responsibility attached to each one of these girls, than there would be if we were working for an employer. Unfortunately, we don't just stand or fall by our own efforts. There's a whole load of factors, availability of contracts, the saleability of the goods, the cost of leather, a whole load of things that have to be considered, which could influence whether we go up...

Q. How do you organise wages.  
EDNA. We all get the same.

Q. The surplus presumably goes back into buying new machines, stocks etc?  
EDNA. Oh yes, must do. If we find that we can give ourselves a pay rise, I dare say we will. But I am quite happy. We get a good wage, and I look at it in the long term not the short term.

Q. You obviously have to compete with other firms, has that created any special problems for you?

NANCY. Well, in the sales of some of the clothes we make, it does. We were making patchwork handbags and we found that we would have to sell them at 80p each to compete with the people in the East End of London, with half-a-dozen people in the back room, stitching like mad. Exploitation, that's what you have to contend with most of the time, and you're exploited if you're not very careful.

I could write a book about the sharks who come down, people calling themselves Merchant Bankers, offering us contracts at slave rates of labour. One fellow came down from Northampton and wanted us to make skirts for him at 7p a skirt, believe it or not. And he was a man with 10 agents on the road, paying them £50 a week commission, selling his stuff at a pound a time.

This means that a workers got to produce enough skirts, at 7p a time, to cover her 90p an hour. We take 90p an hour now, because it's a flat rate west with an hourly rate, there's no differentials.

If you think of it in terms of 7p an item, she's going to have to do a hell of a lot of 7p, with her nose glued to the machine, to earn that 90p. Alright she has to do some skirts now, but at least she's doing them for herself. She's not doing them so some little fat slob from the Midlands can sell them and make a massive profit, so that he can buy another Aston Martin, or whatever, at the end of next year.

What we are selling is our own and we sell at a realistic price. We get a decent price for them, enough to pay the workers here well over the guaranteed wage, which is the union guaranteed rate, for the job. In fact I think we are paying the highest rates in Fakenham now. The flat rate wage is £18.62. That's mine as well. I used to take home £25 before the takeover.

Q. Before you said that everybody was learning how to do all the different jobs.  
EDNA. Yes, everybody's interchangeable.

Q. And is everybody happy about that?  
EDNA. Yes, well it makes variety and you don't get bored on one job. In a factory you are doing one job all the time, but here if somebody is wanted over somewhere else they change over. Variety is the spice of life.

Q. What about the 'managerial' side of things?  
EDNA. Well, Pat does the accounts, she's had to learn book-keeping (Pat used to be a machinist).

Q. Taking over the 'managerial' side of the

factory must have been very important.  
NANCY. Well you see most of these things (stitching, work-in, etc) end up with somebody stepping in and taking you over. But we were lucky enough to avoid that, because that was one of the pitfalls I could foresee, and we didn't want to go back to square one, after 18 weeks without anything, and have some other board of management, or whatever they call themselves stepping in and doing our skills.

Q. Starting all over again.  
NANCY. Yes.. and using our skills, our brains and our labour to swell their profits, and then if, for some unknown reason they found that we weren't a 'paying proposition', they'd just pull the props out from under us again.

Q. Were the workers very apprehensive about taking over? Was it difficult taking over the managers jobs?  
NANCY. We were apprehensive. Maybe I had an advantage there, because I used to virtually manage the place before.

Q. So the owners, Sextons and Everards, didn't really DO anything?  
NANCY. THEY DID! They let us go bust and they sold us out to Jack Tausman!

Q. What about if someone wants to do overtime, they just do it and lock up themselves?  
EDNA. Yes, everybody knows how to lock up and what to do with the keys.

Q. And if someone wants a day off they just take a day off?  
EDNA. Well we like to know - so that we can rearrange.

Q. And when people are off sick, they don't have to bring in sick notes?  
EDNA. There's one girl off sick now, but she brings in her sick notes so that I can claim her union benefit for her (Edna is the shop steward).

Q. It's only for the union benefit, nothing else?  
EDNA. No. It's only for the benefit. We know she's off sick, so that's that. Nobody stays off sick unless they have to.

Q. Is your organisation of production the same as when you first started working-in?  
NANCY. If we have some contract work it's a little bit different because the things we are making are more specialised, and you have to spread them out a bit. One girl will do one operation and another will do the next operation, but they still earn much the same money. In the early stages I think maybe some of the best machinists resented it a bit, because they could do perhaps three times as much as the younger girls who hadn't the experience. But they realise now that they have a responsibility to those inexperienced girls, the same way that the inexperienced girls have a responsibility to try. For everybody's sake, not just for her sake because it's adding 25p bonus to her wages. To try without giving your nose to the machine again, and not having time to live or breathe.

It's a process of education for all of us and the only way I can put it. This is the interesting thing about it. We make a hell of a lot of mistakes, but it's exciting and it's a challenge.

Q. Do you think the factory is more efficient now, because of the organisation and the atmosphere?

NANCY. Yes. It may not look like it to people who come in, who are used to seeing workers with their heads down all the time. You stop for 5 mins., you can make it up again AND be more happy and relaxed. Some people think they have got to chain you down even when you are drinking coffee, and that you've got to have the chain gang atmosphere around you.

Q. You have meetings every fortnight to discuss things and to make the decisions?

EDNA. We have meetings to discuss...we talk the right way round things. You can't expect decisions to be made 'up above'. We would never accept it again, we'd want to know what was going on. When you are working in a factory you don't make your own decisions...you just get rusty...you just look at things and think 'what the hell'.

Once you've had your eyes open - you'd never accept it again.

Q. Does everybody here take an active part in the meetings?  
PAT. Oh yes. Everybody that's here. In fact we usually wait until everybody is here.

NANCY. One girl decides she is going to do this, or everybody decides this and that...if we can't decide we'll have a show of hands. We decide everything, big things and little things. But they are decisions taken by every body that's the important thing, not just one person floating around saying 'you do this and you do that'.

Q. Workers taking over their factories has serious political implications doesn't it?  
EDNA. Well at the time I did not think of it as political. But let's face it none of the political parties would agree with what we have done...because when people do this there is something radically wrong.

And you get whiz kids like Blimmin' Bentley (Triang) who goes around shutting this factory, buying that one. You just can't play ducks and drakes with people's lives. He's a millionaire at thirty, but he's a millionaire on somebody's sweat and blood!

And the politicians just sit in the House of Commons and take the money. They have no idea what the people of this country are thinking.

NANCY. Alright, politics did enter into it, but you weren't thinking of it from a purely political angle. What we were struggling for was to stay alive.

Q. Do you think it is a good idea for other workers to do this?  
NANCY. Of course it is a good idea!

Q. But do you think it is only to be done to fight redundancies?  
EDNA. The trouble is some people couldn't care a damn until they come smack up against it and they haven't got a job. But the point is it is too late to start thinking about it then, you've GOT TO START THINKING ABOUT IT BEFORE.

NANCY. You know there is a whole load of junk being talked about 'worker participation', and there are a few other things. But they just a cover up for, you know, hand the workers

a bonus, maybe £10, at the end of three months, and that's workers-participation. That's not what it's about, not at all. I think basically people have to realise their own potential. But it's very difficult because people are indoctrinated, they're conditioned.

The workers of Fakenham realised that the bosses were responsible for the redundancies and low wages, and that a new set of bosses was not the solution to their problems. They chose real control, real freedom and equality - Workers Management.

Most people now realise that the capitalist system is the bosses' system. It means that the majority remain poor, hard-working slaves whilst the bosses can live in luxury and freedom. But far too long the workers have demanded reforms, and have then defended their reforms when the bosses have tried to make those reforms useless.

Some workers have realised that this system is impossible to reform. It is the bosses system from start to finish. It is their Parliament and their laws, and they 'own' all the wealth.

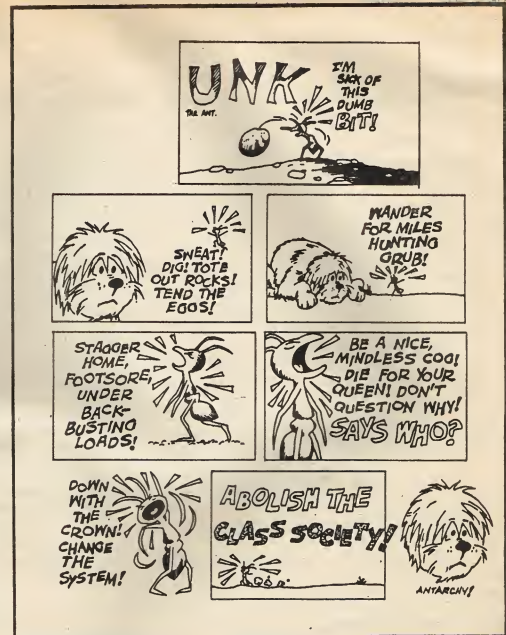
Reforms are useless, only a complete change, transferring real power to working people, - a revolution -, will create a really free and equal society.

Workers Management is of course an important part of this new society. The workers of Fakenham might regret that they are small in number and are isolated. But any attempt by a LARGE section of the working class or self management will meet massive resistance from the bosses. They will use every weapon in their arsenal. Everyday they use most of these weapons to keep workers passive: - they use their laws to attack workers (a particular favourite of the present Tory government).

- they use their newspapers to lie and distort the facts. - and in the face of any large and organised resistance (or attack) from workers they will resort to their army.

The power of the bosses (represented by the State) is vast. But it can be defeated if it is attacked consistently by a united working class.

Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your bosses!





UNION-MANAGEMENT VICTIMISATION DEAL

# DID HE FALL OR WAS HE PUSHED?

Three and a half months ago, the management of the Press Association sacked the FOC (chief steward) of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (NATSOPA) Clerical Chapel for being on unofficial strike over a pay claim.

On the 9th of January the Executive Council of NATSOPA decided to take no action demanding his reinstatement. The case made quite a stir at the time as it was not only gross victimisation of one striker (out of two hundred and twenty) but also because the sacked man, John Lawrence, was an anarchist militant.

NATSOPA is run by a warring coalition of Stalinists and Catholic Action freaks. The EC has refused to demand his reinstatement despite the London Clerical Branch twice recommending this.

In fact, the EC has actively connived at his dismissal throughout. Rumour abounds that Briginshaw, General Secretary of NATSOPA and darling of the Morning Star, instructed Bloom, PA General Manager, on the best tactics to follow. This is very likely as Briginshaw has a personal and political grudge against Lawrence, especially since he clashed with the union over NATSOPA splitting from SOGAT, the one time joint print union.

No-one in NATSOPA can stand up and say so however, since people have been expelled for less - which, in a closed shop industry, means no job.

## UNION CONTROL

In Fleet St., the union Machine Branch controls the work process, has hiring and firing power and says who earns the big money.

As will be seen from the Lawrence case there is a great deal of difference between this Mafia-like union control and any form of workers' control. In fact the union acts as the bosses' overseers and labour suppliers... 'as long as you buy your labour from us, then we'll give you a workforce that will be reasonably docile'. Proof of this is the fact that not only was the PA strike the first Clerk's strike in Fleet St. It was also the first unofficial strike there ever.

All other actions before and since have always been on the nod from the bureaucrats (eg. the stoppage for the Dockers in Pentonville).

In the Clerical Branch, the union is not quite as much in control, although it is very much a closed shop.

Briginshaw came to power (having divested himself of his awkward CP card), on a platform of principled opposition to the right wing then in control and to fight corruption.

Under Briginshaw's leadership, at the time the Industrial Relations Act was being introduced, union funds were placed in an employment agency called Media Specialists Bureau. This was said to be part of a plan to hide it from the Registrar General. Most of the shares in Media Specialists are said to have been owned by Briginshaw Junior. Sadly however, this exciting breakthrough in labour relations didn't last due to market forces of capitalism beyond their control.

## HATCHETMEN

Not only does the union work as the employers' hatchetman, it also asks you to like them and the employers for doing it. The London Clerical Branch Secretary, John Lewis, told a mass meeting of the PA Chapel at the beginning of their pay dispute that their General Manager was 'a fine man', and that in their dispute he was the aggrieved party. He then made the statement which caused amazement and disgust throughout Fleet St. 'If you continue in this action, then the union considers that you have dismissed yourself from the employ of the PA. If they ask us to replace you with official union labour we will do so.' This is from a guy who, up till the time he was elected, was making

cooing noises at the International Socialists.

The original dispute was over grossly disparaged wage offers from the PA to the NATSOPA Clerical Chapel and the NUJ Chapel (the journalists - otherwise known as the National Union of Judases, for their fine record of blacklegging wherever possible). The clerks went on strike despite similar threats from the Branch Sec. and allegations that the Chapel were 'blackshirts' and 'gangsters'. Their crime was that they didn't ask the EC for permission to strike.

## PURGE

Just to have their political bread buttered on both sides, the union also denounced the chapel as 'anarchistic'. This was in a circular letter from London Joint Branch Secretary, O'Brien, which contained five complete lies and several deliberate distortions. Appropriately enough it began: 'Because of the lies, omissions, and misrepresentation of fact...' It was however referring to PA leaflets setting out the background to their unofficial dispute. This letter, of a type popular at the Moscow trials, ended: 'The Society is under attack here and it is necessary to ask all members for their loyal support in trying to control this chaotic and anarchic situation, and no support either moral or financial should be given to these people, either by chapels or individuals.'

In furtherance of this policy, threats and intimidation were used against anyone who tried to help the strikers. The FOC of the PA-NATSOPA RIRMA Chapel (which groups the messengers and hall-porters)



JOHN LAWRENCE, victimised militant

was actually expelled from the union for calling a Chapel meeting which resulted in the RIRMA Chapel coming out in sympathy with the Clerical Chapel. He was later reinstated on appeal but has been barred from holding office in the union for life. As well as John Lawrence, all the PA Clerical Chapel Committee have been barred from holding office in the union for life and fined £20 each.

The News of the World RIRMA Chapel, which held a collection for the strikers in defiance of the bureaucracy's orders, were fined £20 apiece, and the FOC was also barred from holding office for life. This kind of tactic ensured that the PA strikers were almost completely isolated from their fellow workers in the industry. Isolated not only from financial support but also from any practical expression of solidarity, such as help on the picket-line or sympathy action and backing. This was especially necessary for clerks on strike for the first time.

## FIGHT BACK

Faced with this isolation and with well-timed letters from the PA management threatening all workers with the sack, the strike gradually collapsed. First the supervisors went back following a defeat of

## TO NEW MEMBERS

The National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants having admitted you a member of the Society request that in your own interests as well as those of the Society to which you now belong, you should conform strictly to, and be guided by, the rules of the Society. If in doubt upon any point, consult the Branch Secretary before taking individual action. By so doing, and by careful adherence to the rules, you will aid in maintaining the status of the Society, and uphold your own reputation and that of your fellow members. If you act independently and without consulting your Branch Secretary, you are breaking the rules and are liable to be heavily fined or expelled. The Society, while contending unyieldingly for a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, will as strictly compel its members to fulfil honourably their engagements with their employers. The honour of the Society, as well as the members, will then be upheld, and employers will recognise that while guarding the rights of labour we do not forget our duties nor shirk them. Thereby confidence will be created between employer and employee.

Yours faithfully,

R. W. BRIGINSHAW,

General Secretary, National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants.

LOVE THY BOSS AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.  
First page of the NATSOPA rule book.

their motion for a return to work. Support from Extel (Exchange Telegraph Co.) was forthcoming, but the effect of this didn't manifest itself in time. If the strike had lasted for another four days all racing results would have been stopped by Extel. This would have been a big boost for the strikers. 'Might-have-beens' don't win battles though.

Such is the fear that union bureaucrats have of the rank and file workers deciding when they will go on strike and how. There are strong similarities between the 'managerial big business elite and the ruling clique of the union. Both have common lifestyles and the one is as scared by workers control of their unions as the other is of workers control of society.

A common cry of the PA strikers and of other workers in the print is 'It's our union we want to run it'. Despite the attempted formation of a breakaway news agency workers' union, which is supposed to have founded on whether or not to register under the IR Act, the only way forward for printworkers is to liberate the union from the bureaucracy, in order to be able to fight the bosses in strength.

A further ironic footnote to this story is the fact that the Department of Employment have decided that John Lawrence was victimised by the PA and have not only paid him back pay of £4000 plus interest, but have advised him that he has a good case for damages against them under the Industrial Relations Act. Not that he will take it up.

## ORA Publications

- ORA 1. Towards a History and Critique of the Anarchist Movement in Recent Times. 5p. plus post.
- ORA 2. Theory and Praxis in Anarchist Organisation. 3p. plus post.
- ORA 3. The Bombthrowers: study of terrorism. 10p. plus post.
- ORA 4. Neither Washington nor Hanoi but Libertarian Socialism. 2p. plus post.
- ORA 5. Introduction to Revolutionary Anarchism. 10p. plus post.
- ORA 6. Iphigeneia 10: Computer Ethics. 5p. plus post.
- ORA 7. Bakunin - Essays on Revolution 5p. plus post.
- ORA 8. Free Speech and Social Revolution. 5p. plus post.

LOCAL GROUP PUBLICATIONS.  
Suppressed Report of the Derry Massacre. 2p N. London group.  
Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. 10p. N. London.  
Anarchism and Ecology. 10p. Lancaster Revolution: Past and Present. 10p. Leeds.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

- NORWICH. Tuesday Feb 6th. 8pm at the University. Members of the ORA on ANARCHISM.
- SOUTH LONDON. Wednesday Feb 7th. 8pm at 3, Belmont Road, London SW4 on WHAT IS ORA?
- HARLECH. Thursday Feb 8th. 8pm the 'Courtyard Hut', Coleg Harlech, Keith Nathan on ORA AND LIBERTARIAN ACTION.
- YORK. Thursday March 8th. 8pm at the University. LIBERTARIANISM NOT LIBERALISM. Speakers: Ro Atkins, Steve Kibble and Tony Fleming.



# CHEAP LABOUR REMILS EAST MIDLANDS ASIAN STRIKE

The struggle of the Asian workers at the Mansfield Hosiery factory at Loughborough, and the history behind it, illustrate important lessons for militants wherever there is a high population of black people. The two strikes in the area that preceded it are virtually unknown.

The first was in Nottingham at the Crepe Sizes factory. 44 Pakistan workers were working an 84 hour week, made up of 12 hour shifts, seven days a week. 'Overtime' was compulsory and gross pay for the week about £40.

The few white workers formed a privileged elite within the factory. Three workers who lost a part or a whole finger in their machines got the sack. One of the workers started trying to unionise the factory and was sacked. The others came out on strike demanding reinstatement of the unofficial shop steward and union recognition.

The local Black People's Freedom Movement initiated a Strike Solidarity Committee (SSC) a united front of revolutionary groups in the area, which organised financial support, a public meeting, and pressure on a very unhelpful Transport and General Workers Union to make the strike official. The TGWU would not go further than black the firm.

After two weeks, just as the Union prepared to attempt a sell-out, the management at Crepe Sizes gave into the demands of the workers.

A further strike took place a few weeks later at Joan Stroud in Long Eaton near Nottingham. This is again a textiles factory with a long history of avoiding militancy. Before it took on Asians, it had employed young people whom it sacked as soon as they qualified as skilled. Here, most workers did a 60 hour week and took home between £20 and £23. An attempt at unionisation met with the same result - a sacking, the same response from the T&G and support from the SSC. This time the public meeting was badly-organised, the T&G effectively played a much more active strike-breaking role during the strike (such as pressurising the strikers not to attend the SSC public meeting). The strike failed. This in spite of impressive financial and other support from the Crepe Sizes workers, who had advanced incredibly during their own strike. Here again the white workers formed a privileged elite and only one came out in support. The occupation of the Union offices was contemplated in this strike, but the victimised shop steward opposed it.

The Mansfield Hosiery strike at Loughborough very clearly represents a development of the

and another agreement led them back to work to find 107 whites, presumably sent by the Employment Exchange, had moved in, including 41 training for the vacant knitters posts.

At this stage, faced with the spread of Asian militancy across the Midlands, the government intervened and set up an 'impartial' enquiry, under Kenneth Robinson. A former right-wing Minister of Health, he had been an unsuccessful enemy of homeless families while in office. As long ago as 1954, he had made a speech against West Indian immigration in the House of Commons. His role was not to see justice done, but to patch up an agreement which would prevent the spread of the conflict. Not until December 4, when the workers occupied the Union offices, was the strike made official.

The government succeeded in its aim, at least temporarily. A pool was created, from which the 41 knitters were to be selected. The scab workers, probably pressurised into taking the jobs by the threat of having their unemployment money cut off, were all placed in it. The Asians also insisted on Asian women applying - an important step.

The pool involves yet another splitting of the workers, making them compete against each other, and blurring the realisation of who the real enemy is. The Asians demand a sizeable whack of the knitting jobs. Otherwise 'peace' will break down again.

Perhaps the most significant thing to come out of the strike was the creation of an action committee. Its purpose is to travel to other black workers in the Midlands and even beyond, talk about the strike and the lessons, and generate as much determination on the part of other workers as they themselves have shown.

So we move forward from the financial and moral support impressively given to Joan Stroud workers by the victors of the Crepe Sizes strike to positive intervention. Already the committee has had calls for help from others attempting to get themselves out of the same sort of intolerable conditions. It is vital this sort of initiative is sustained, and that it is taken up by women workers as well. The whole area of cheap labour, sweat shop factories which blacks and women most of all have to cope with, needs to be attacked and finally smashed.

The role of groups like the Black People's

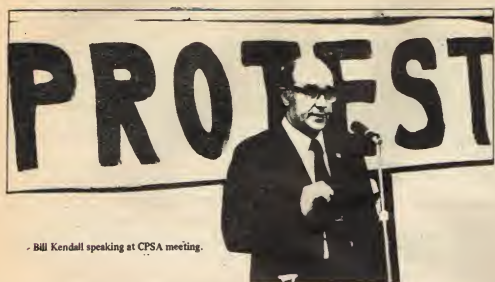
Freedom Movement is clearly vital. It is only when these act in support of their fellow-blacks that there is any possibility of creating a real fight against racism which splits the working class. Black freedom groups confront the white worker with the with the fact he cannot ignore the black - he must either see him as a comrade or an enemy. And that if he takes the latter view he ends up siding with the boss. The lesson of South Africa is immediate and obvious at a time when the white unions there are having to compromise their racial domination to prevent being economically undercut. The role of the black groups is much the same as women's liberation should play for women.

One of the lessons that comes out of the history of the Mansfield Hosiery strike is the way in which bosses use the most exploited workers - women and blacks - against each other. One criticism of the strike has been the subsidiary role of Asian women as supporters only of the strike. It demonstrates the need for black workers in their turn to support women.

The Asians' introduction of women into the pool of candidates for knitting jobs represents an important step toward this. It is vital that intervening action groups develop among women workers, and that a high level of co-ordination between women and blacks takes place. The role of white male militants in this situation is to give consistent support, and fight in turn to bring already active steward combines and the like into these networks to assist and strengthen the struggle.

The role of the trade union bureaucracies as enemies of the workers in struggle is at its most exposed in this, the new era of capitalism. As we settle into the Industrial Relations Act this becomes increasingly clear at all levels. The simple fact is that workers have only themselves and their class solidarity, linking with other rank-and-file workers to depend on.

The struggle for better wages and conditions has to become the starting point for a revolutionary struggle. Capitalism can't give workers control of their jobs, or even still maintain their living standards any longer. The smallest demands of the working class lead either to defeat, to new price increases, new restrictions of freedom, or they lead to socialism based on workers' councils.



Bill Kendall speaking at CPSA meeting.

The present unrest in the Civil Service has come as a surprise to a lot of people. It should not have done so. For a long time their wages have trailed those of similar workers in private enterprise. The last straw was the freezing of their agreed pay rise due on January 1st.

There are four unions in the Civil Service. The Civil Service Union, which covers industrial staff, such as cleaners, was the union involved in the women cleaners strike at the Ministry of Defence last year. It is not involved in the current dispute. Nor is the Institute of Civil Servants, the top management 'union'.

The two involved are the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA), the union of clerical officers and assistants - the counter clerks and so on; and the Society of Civil Servants (SCS), the executive staff union - for supervisors.

The body that puts forward the guidelines for pay increases is the Pay Research Unit, originally set up to report every four years on civil servants pay. In the 1960s as inflation set in, this was altered to every two years. For clerical staff, the Unit's approach is to study comparable pay levels in banking, insurance and the like; it is supposed to take into account all figures, including fringe benefits. The figures thus arrived at form the basis for negotiation between the Civil Service Department, which deals with pay, and the joint 'A Committee' of the CPSA and SCS. In 1971 it was a non-negotiating year, but the soaring inflation made for an 'interim pay award' averaging 7.2%.

Civil servants now lag 20% behind, and the wage freeze has meant they don't even catch up. The result is a rising tide of militancy, more among the younger work force than the middle aged who are still appalled

at the prospect of industrial action.

Within CPSA, the most important of the unions for its class position, the Communist Party hold control. Not surprisingly, it has to contend with an anti Communist faction called 'The Group'. Less prominent is its battle against the left wing Redder Tape group. The union, as typical of CP-controlled bodies, is stagnantly bureaucratic. The current tactic of protests is a traditional technique designed to release militant feeling harmlessly. Though it has to be said that the level of militancy is uneven, to say the least.

It is obviously essential to intensify the struggle for shopfloor control of the conflict between workers and management, and to link up resulting action committees with shopfloor and shop steward combines within and beyond the Civil Service.

The CPSA's attitude to Claimants Unions was also somewhat surprising. The CPSA executives have sent out an instruction to branches saying that where Claimants Unions exist their members should co-operate with the CU to co-ordinate action and achieve a better understanding between the staff and CUs. The General Secretary of the CPSA, Bill Kendall, was secretary of the Unemployed Workers Union in the 1950s and several other union officials were active in the UWW. The officials Time Out spoke to also said that at several local offices their members met regularly with Claimants Unions to discuss various kinds of action.

The Claimants Unions have in the past resorted to blanket condemnations of everyone on the other side of the counter, in dot offices and the S.S. Even in reformist terms this is suicidal. It is vital claimants understand the contradictions within the structure of the Civil Service. And that they realise that their enemies are not the people across

the counter, who often take home little more than they get when they're not working, but those at the top - the supervisors, the office managers and upwards.

The first breakthrough with this was the decision of London Claimants Unions to collectively support the CPSA in its struggle. Other groups did the same, although one London Claimants Union was criticised by others for 'going too far'. In places the CPSA made the first move. At the National Federation of Claimants Unions Conference in Newcastle, a decision was made to give national support to the CPSA. Each C.U. was to write to the local branch of the CPSA offering support and asking them to reciprocate and support the Claimants Unions in their campaign on winter heating. This marked a crucial development. A grasp of the necessity of class solidarity both in theory and practice was at last reached.

It is essential that the Claimants Unions support the struggle of counter clerks; it is equally important that they point out the class contradictions within the Civil Service and repeatedly remind the clerks who the real enemy are. They are justified in criticising the reactionary behaviour of many clerks. But it is meaningless to do so unless they explain why and are prepared to suggest ways forward.

IN LEEDS members of the Claimants Unions leafleted the January 10th protest meeting for the DHSS workers jointly organised by the CPSA/SCS. (There were other meetings for other departments). The leaflet stressed the need for a united front of employed and unemployed workers for a decent living income. The leaflet asked the DHSS staff to support the Claimants Union. The leaflets were generally welcomed by the members of the CPSA who were attending the meeting.



## ONE (NEW) LAW FOR THE RICH

CONT. FROM P.2

this rise, or that they will be hit or under the restriction that they would have been under no restriction at all. Management have always taken advantage of the low level of militancy of low paid workers to continue sweatshops, dangerous work conditions and the rest. They will not have a sudden change of heart during the freeze, and 'pay regard to the importance the Government attaches to the plight of the lower paid'. The Government do not really want them to. If they had they would have laid down fines and penalties for unco-operative managements, as they have for suspected strikers.

The big deal for pensioners is also so much air. The government can claim that their pledge to 'maintain their purchasing power' has been upheld within the Bill as it stands, since it is supposed to keep prices level. They have promised to increase pensions again in the autumn. As Vic Feather points out, this wouldn't cover the price rises from their last pension increase to the present. The Press found the death of an old-age pensioner newsworthy at Christmas. They have apparently forgotten the continuing death toll from starvation and cold. Perhaps this is because there is no Miners' Strike to blame, and people might realise that pensions were to blame.

The lowest paid workers are women. Under the Equal Pay Act, they were promised to have 90% of the corresponding male rate by 1973. The loopholes in it were many, but it gave women something to unite around. The government will not enforce this Act, so nothing will be done. Instead the govt. 'wish' progress towards a reduction of the male/female differential by up to one third. They won't even enforce this, so it won't happen unless women fight for it. The entry into the Common Market because of the serious World economic crisis, means that the British industrialists face tough competition for profits. They need a docile and low-paid workforce which is, of course, why this Bill is being introduced. Since the govt. has announced that it refuses to enforce equal pay, it is clear that they hope women will be forced out to work for low wages, to supplement their husband's limited pay. The milk-snatcher, Thatcher, showed out-of-character

benevolence in enlarging nursery education. This can be understood now, it helps to release women into the workforce.

The sincere-sounding speeches of Heath and co. are a cover for their intention to take us back to the 30's. Unemployment will increase even further, as British capitalists feel the squeeze and turn more to investing abroad. Cuts in Welfare benefits will continue - school milk has gone, school dinners are going up, and changes in Family Allowances are being proposed.

The Bill is a second major attempt to clamp down on the living standards of working people. When the British bosses were among those leading the world market, they could afford to allow people a stake in the big game. Now British industry is low down in the list of major manufacturers and traders, they can no longer afford it. To safeguard profits they must cut back on the living standards of workers and their families, who will need more than the permitted pay increase to buy the essentials of food, rent, rates, clothing and so on. To prevent people getting this money, the government must take away the negotiating rights, won by years of militant action. The Law is always the bosses' law, and their new law makes it illegal to even threaten to organise.

Once again the class war comes out into the open. The only way we can fight it is as a class. If they want women as cheap, docile labour, we will show them - as Fakhmen women have - that we aren't docile and we refuse to accept subsistence wages. The male workers will realise that our fight for equal pay is not to take money away from them, but to stop us being used as strike-breakers and cheap substitutes. White workers will realise the same for Asians and Blacks - racism is another way the bosses divide and rule. And if the industrialists are looking to the million unemployed to provide a pool of labour ready to step into the jobs of sacked militants, they will find the Claimants' Unions standing with the employed.

The freeing of the Dockers reminds us of our strength when united. It convinced the Tories that we weren't so docile, and that they needed stronger measures. This act is an example of their ability to learn from events. We must learn too. United and with the will to fight we can defeat any Tory Bill. If we do more than that and learn in the

process how to organise ourselves and keep all our decisions and control of our actions in our own hands, then we can go one better. We can start on the road to finishing the Tories forever. We can throw aside all their would-be replacements - liberal, labour or 'revolutionary' and working people can start to plan a society in which we work for the common good and our own needs. And we organise it ourselves.

For the moment this means starting with the slogan *An injury to one is an injury to all*. And carrying it into practice by giving all support we can to working people in struggle. Black or white, men or women, pensioners or kids.

## EUROPE?

CONT. FROM P.2

In all this the CP has exposed itself as a group which attempts to keep all struggles within the bounds of the union bureaucracy. This is exactly what they have been doing to the French and Italian workers especially since 1968.

British Steel has not just clattered its own workforce. It has also turned the screws on its British competitors so hard that they were talking of going to the Common Market bureaucrats to complain about 'unfair practices'.

Going international has not been a bed of roses, even though this is the only way capitalism can sustain growth. Michelin who are planning to soak up three West German firms, one Austrian and a French one, face the unions coordinating. This is after it has already been hit by transnational strikes in Clermont in France and Vittoria in Spain.

Dunlop-Pirelli also faces trouble. The 'threat' of Dunlop dumping Pirelli wasn't true, but Pirelli in Italy has been at a standstill for a long time now. Dunlop-Pirelli covers 12 countries, including Yugoslavia. In Britain it has made 8000 redundant over the past two years. Everywhere it is trying to solve its problems by massive lay-offs and short-time working.

Dunlop, whatever its problems, does see its neck in to go international. It is precisely this that has taken us into Europe. The statement of Agnelli, boss of Fiat, that Italian capitalism had to use Europe to go multi-national, applies as much to British capitalism, although the crisis is perhaps not so acute.

British bosses have faced three problems all apparently insoluble. Industry has to sustain a 5% national growth, but if it does so the balance of payments deficit will spiral upwards. Last years deficit was £40 million and at the end of this year it could be £1,000,000 million. Even if its only a deficit of £650 million, another run on the pound is still likely. With a currency still fragile, although floating, another attack by speculators is always on the cards. The bosses need more investment and less consumption.

Whether British bosses will pull it off remains to be seen. Herman Kahn, futurologist and the man who loves to contemplate nuclear war, promises Britain a place at the bottom of the European income league tables.

Even the Stock Exchange, one of the bastions of international finance capital, is in for a heating. It just hasn't got the right geographical or political position to become the Wall Street of Europe.

Meanwhile the Common Market Commission is working hard on establishing an integrated industrial framework for European capitalism to operate in. In spite of backward elements of the bosses, they understand clearly that they've got to con the workers into thinking it is their Europe and their industry. Hence the demand for workers' participation. It isn't just being discussed in Europe, our own TUC is studying it with interest.

This sort of structure is just a more liberal version of our own Industrial Relations Act. Hitler inaugurated the same concept, but his political cover was pretty shaky. The march to the corporate state was got under way by the last Labour government, with Barbara Castle's In Place of Strife. Labour, faced with a trade union revolt and loss of votes, lost its nerve. The Tories, with less to lose, took it up and are in the process of enforcing it. We now have a political consensus, where Labour and Tory are virtually indistinguishable and both committed to making

capitalism work. They talk about the 'national interest'. Crudely, this is the idea of boss scratching workers back as long as worker scratches boss's. And the boss keeps firm control of the backscratcher.

Whatever the current disagreements of international chemical unions and Dunlop-Pirelli and Michelin, the simple fact is that every trade union leadership talks to the government while their members are economically slaughtered. This is true whether its the right wing Labour TUC or the Communist run GDT. In Italy the unions introduced appointed shop stewards, called 'line delegates', to head off worker militancy. But because of their ultimate dependence on the workers there was trouble. Although they attempted to play a reformist role, the level of militancy forced them to demand so much the bosses wanted to abolish them when the contracts came up for review.

While the workers struggle to keep their noses above water, we have the press doing its bit for Europe. Strasbourg's helpless parliament is apparently a new development for Western democracy and is where its all going to happen.

American capitalism also has problems, and therefore lines up for a pitched battle with the EEC. It has penetrated Eastern Europe with its Import-Export Aid agreements, starting with Russia. This cost the Soviet Union several million dollars in 'repaying' lend-lease debts. This was the logic of peaceful competition between ideological systems. State capitalism is increasingly outdated in an age of multi-national corporations. And America is a conglomerate of multi-national companies spreading outwards supported if necessary by its Army. In fighting Europe it has several things going for it. It is more advanced technologically. Europe depends on the American market for its exports. And the divisions within the Common Market partners on agriculture, on the ex-colonial territories of some, provide it with a divided enemy.

Added to this is the ineffectiveness of the EEC's anti-monopolism. Firms have to grow to survive. In a period of greatly reduced profit margins they have to expand by absorbing other firms, whether because they simply provide something which may give more profits - the economic dinosaurs called conglomerates then emerge. Previous mention has been made of Bowaters and P & O's moves in these directions. Britain has scored more than just the French by taking over their indigenous firms. But, although this may not be in the interests of the bosses who are gobhied up, it is certainly necessary for the expansion and attempted stabilisation of European capitalism.

The failure of the Commission to stop the takeover of a sector of the metal industry in Europe by American firm Continental Can was far more important. Americans also control the computer industry, and a sizeable section of the British motor industry.

In its turn, the EEC is building a Mediterranean trade block; anticipating trade pacts with India and Brazil (although refusing to admit fascist Brazil's friends Spain and Greece to the Market), and negotiating with the Far East's private enterprise Association of South East Asian Nations.

All this indicates, with the massive protectionist trade barriers being attempted, the move towards a corporate continent is outdated before it has even been constructed. It may be partly an attempt to grow. We should not ignore the protectionist elements of it, the hopeless refusal of capitalism to face the fact that the world market is wide open, the nation-state and organs of parliamentary democracy are ineffective.

The battle is now an international one. As the bosses become more internationalized the workers inevitably do so too. Patriotism nationalism and racism are proving useless ideas to the working class in this situation. As the union bosses sell out increasingly on an international level, so the struggle will inevitably crystallize as one between the bosses and the workers on the factory floor and in their communities.

It is crucial that the workers rapidly build up international contacts and co-ordination at the level of shopfloor organisation: these have to reach across every firm, every industry, every frontier and continent.

This is the level to which the struggle has now moved.

## FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

**MOLE EXPRESS** Manchester voice of revolutionary struggle. News/reviews/exposes/graphics/features. 10p. monthly from 7, Summer Terrace, Manchester 14 SWD.

**INSIDE STORY** the radical magazine which specialises in the stories Fleet St. won't print. For sample copy send 25p. to Dept. AP20, 3 Belmont Road, London SW4.

**BLACK AND RED OUTLOOK** monthly paper of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance. Sub. £1 per 10 copies. A.Roberts, 118, Albert Ave. Prestwich, Lancs.

**LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION** magazine. Copies 10p. from 1, Wilne St., Leicester.

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**FRONT LIBERTAIRE**, fortnightly paper of ORA France. Sample copy from N. London group, subscription details from 33, rue des Viginales, Paris 20e, France.

Our thanks to George Snow for photos, Lee Sanders for her enlarger, the Fakenham women for their inspiration.

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**APRIL 1973**

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# **libertarian struggle**



**FOR WORKERS POWER**

## **DANGER!**



## **THE PARTY BETRAYS**

**paper of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists**





# 1964 HARD

The main thing that the general election showed was that the Tory government did not get the support it asked for in the working-class organisations, although Heath demonstrated that he was willing to hold on to his reactionary policies to the very end. The election was called because the Tories recognized that a crisis was developing within the structure of British capitalism—a crisis that would deepen in the following two years. The £2,000 million balance of payments deficit together with the growing consciousness and militancy of the working class was leading to an inevitable squeeze on profit margins. The Tories saw the time as ripe to obtain a 'vote of confidence' to continue and increase their attacks on the living standards of the working class in their attempt to maintain profits and bolster up the capitalist system. However the Tories were denied a majority by a combination of two factors. Firstly in the traditional working class areas the high turnover of voters signified that many people who had previously abstained were coming out in support of the Labour party with the hope of bringing down the reactionary rule of the Tories. Secondly, it would appear that in Conservative strongholds many working class voters switched their vote to the Liberal party as a move to support the candidate most likely to gain a seat from the Tories. It would therefore seem that the working class used their votes, not merely to put a Labour government into parliament, but to prevent the return to power of the Tories and their reactionary policies. Clearly this would indicate the solidarity of the working class in their refusal to accept for any longer the Tories' attacks on their living standards.

Now that Labour is in power it seems that Wilson's plan will follow the pattern of 1964. He will introduce non-controversial policies with the hope, in the next 18 months, of showing that a Labour government is capable of managing the economy, after which he will call for another general election on the platform of efficient management. Whether such a course will be possible will depend upon the prevailing economic conditions. If a serious crisis develops then a policy of 'good management' will be doomed and it is likely that a national government will be formed, reflecting the situation of 1929-31, accompanied by vicious and repressive attacks on the working class. It is obvious however that the extent to which the Labour Party will gain any ground, given its existence as a minority government, will depend on the course taken by the Liberal and Nationalist groups in parliament. There seems to be little doubt that the Liberals will be unwilling to see the immediate collapse of the Labour government because, after their recent campaign, their funds are far too low to sustain another attempt to stand candidates on a large scale. Thus, with the abstentionism of the Liberals and scraps of support from the Nationalists, for example on the issues of nationaliz-

-ation of North sea oil, the E.E.C., the repeal of the Industrial Relations and Housing Finance acts, it seems likely that Labour may maintain sufficient strength to stay in power for the next two years.

## LABOUR'S PROGRAMME

What then will Labour's programme be in the coming months?

1. The settlement with the miners, whilst not a total victory, has shown that an organised and solid section of the working class can bring down a government and secure substantial economic gains. We must learn the lessons of the action and build on the gains made through it.

2. Perhaps their first major move in parliament will be the effective repeal of the Industrial Relations Act in return for the acceptance of the 'Social Contract' idea amongst the trade union leadership. The working class must be aware of what this means. The 'social contract' proposal will represent, at best a standstill and quite likely a fall in the living standards of the working class since the government will primarily be concerned with maintaining the profit margins of British capitalism as a symbol of their respectability within international capitalism. Any such safeguarding of profits accompanied by 'industrial peace' must inevitably involve a reduction in the living standards of the working class.

3. A further and perhaps equally dangerous piece of legislation which Labour might well introduce under the label of the 'Industry Act' will involve plans to institutionalise workers' participation in industry. Such a move will serve only to divert the working class from their conscious involvement in the conflict with the capitalist class (see pps. 4 & 5 on workers control.)

4. The Housing Finance Act: It seems clear that, because of the existing economic situation the Labour government will be incapable of carrying out any large scale deficit financing in the field of housing and that local government will have to accept the impossible burden and thus the blame for inadequate housing. Therefore while the Housing Finance Act might be repealed it is unlikely that it will herald any meaningful improvement in the housing situation. Furthermore Labour's proposals for the control of land only take into account development land and that it is only the profits of property companies that will be taxed. They will not be taken over. Thus the development of housing will remain subject to the whims of private enterprise and profit. As a result there will be insufficient and inadequate provision of housing with the effect that rents and house prices will continue to rise.

5. The Labour proposals to nationalise North sea and Celtic sea oil will be strongly limited by the pressures of the Liberals and Nationalists. What is most likely, if any scheme is developed, is a

state and private industry co-operation which will ensure the return of high profits to the private sector. The importance of the government's method of dealing with North sea oil is reflected in the fact that it will clearly affect Britain's standing in the international capital market, increasing her competitiveness and thus giving the appearance that Labour is capable of running the economy and developing it. The power that private enterprise will wield in any development scheme will however mean that little gain will be achieved for the working class, either nationally or internationally.

6. The Labour party realizes that the working class are no longer willing to accept the arrangement that now exists between Britain and international capitalists, the E.E.C. In fact however they will be restricted in their attempts to 'renegotiate', not only by the Tories and Liberals, but also by the strong pro-market voices in their own party. However even if such obstacles did not exist the freedom of negotiation, and indeed action in such fields as regional development, food subsidies and oil nationalisation would be completely restricted by the total domination of capital interests in the Common Market.

7. Apart from pension increases and perhaps some minor changes, such as in the area of milk and museum charges, the government will not take any action in education or social service provisions and their whole programme in these fields will be shelved. The excuse will be given, as during the 1964-70 government (see 'Lest we forget') that the Balance of Payments will not allow any action to be taken in these areas, and that to do so would damage the proverbial 'National Interest'.

8. The Labour Party's plans for nationalisation will get nowhere. Not only are there strong elements within the Labour ranks who would oppose moves for nationalisation, but both national and international capitalism would not allow it. Thus, even if Labour had a clear majority, organized capitalist pressure would prevent the carrying out of their manifesto.

a) Capitalist forces will use every legal and extra legal measure possible to block these proposals.

b) Capitalists would only let through those proposals where the gains to be made from nationalisation through colossal compensation would cripple the industries involved for decades to come e.g. coal and railways would benefit with industries in the private sector in terms of high profits due to released supplies.

c) Even the full acceptance of Labour policies would represent little more than moves in specific areas of industry, to trip the present economy further towards state capitalism. Nationalisation within a capitalist framework does nothing to



# LABOUR 1974

change the fundamental balance of class power in society. The resources received from industry would still be used to perpetuate the system of bourgeois privilege and profit upon which the structure of capitalism depends.

d) Under nationalisation there will still remain a distinction between those who produce and those who do not: between the worker and the manager... the latter being appointed from above. Production relations will not be changed. There will still be a basic division between those who give orders and those who carry them out.

Labour supporters might argue that it is the 'Stander majority that the Labour government have or the balance of payments

situation that will prevent them from carrying out the socialist elements in their manifesto. In fact it is quite clear that the Labour programme has little, if any, real socialistic content. It makes no basic attacks on the profit domination of the economy. For example the profits made by banks alone, in the past months would be enough to pay for Labour's social programme. It is obvious enough that there can be no parliamentary road to socialism. Any attempt to change the fundamental distribution of wealth in the country, which is merely blocked by the 'peaceful' expression of majority wishes, will be met by the full force of the capitalist system which has the control of the laws, the means of production, the armed forces and the media.

## OUR DEMANDS

The working class must unite to fight for the following demands-

- 1) Democratisation of the unions with direct responsibility to the shop floor
- 2) The repeal of all laws which affect the right of the working class to organize and picket.
- 3) Eliminate all privilege in the education and social services.
- 4) Erradicate differentials in living standards.
- 5) No toleration of the capitalist's notion of 'national interest' which is used solely as an excuse to limit the wages of the working class.
- 6) To forge strong links between the working class of all countries. This is particularly important to counteract the strength of the international capitalist blocks, such as the Common Market.
- 7) The right of the working class to manage and control the means of production. Ownership and control of land by the working class.



## LEST WE FORGET.....

Speaking on October 3rd 1964, twelve days before winning the general election, Harold Wilson said, "You cannot go cap in hand to the central bankers as the Tories have been forced to do, and maintain your freedom of action, whether on policies maintaining employment here in Britain or even on social policies. The central bankers will before long demand that Britain puts her house in order, and their idea of an orderly house usually means vicious inroads into the welfare state and a one-sided pay pause. The government will launch into savage cuts. The brunt will again fall on wages, on salaries and on the ordinary family struggling to make ends meet."

This is exactly what happened to Labour during the next six years of Labour rule.

### Labour Record 1964-70

The 'attack on inequality' never took place. Instead taxes rose from 20% to 33%, whilst taxes on profit and dividend fell from 50% to 34%. It made no difference what government was in power. Under Labour inequality was increased by tax changes; in 1965-66 the total taxes on profits and wealth were less than the tax on tobacco alone. A government report showed that the proportion of income tax was the same for the low paid as for the rich



Wilson sells out again

The 'strengthening of the Welfare State' The 1964 manifesto promised the abolition of prescription charges. In 1968 £25m. was saved by reintroducing them. In the same year drug companies made £37.7m. profit out of the National Health and they spent £24m. on packaging and advertisements. School meals went up in price and so did dental charges. Free school milk for the over-elevens was stopped at the same time as reports were showing an increase in rickets in some areas. A massive increase in means-testing occurred; not only did needy families not get benefits they were entitled to but thousands of pounds were spent hunting 'scroungers'.

Labour's 'attack on low pay' got caught up in the 'freeze'. Labour's incomes policy was smashed by the revolt of the low paid, led by the dustmen in 1969. The wage freeze had no effect in helping the lower paid which was its 'justification'.

Harold Wilson's 'new era of industrial relations' ended up with him personally smashing the seamen's strike of 1966, some of whom were getting only £15 for a 56hr week. Barbara Castle tried to introduce, 'In Place of Strife', a document so reactionary that twenty-nine clauses in Carr's 'Fair Deal at Work' are taken from it. The era ended with a fifty per cent increase in unemployment.

Between 1964 and 1970, prices rose by 25%; immigration controls were tightened and racialism encouraged; British troops were sent to Northern Ireland; council house rents went up and no housing targets were met; the number of police increased by 25% and the number of teachers by only 8%.

The fact that Labour's record is so bad is not due to bad luck or lack of time or corrupt leaders, but to their belief that fundamental economic change can take place gradually through the existing state machinery of parliament. Any economic reform which threatens the economic power of the class who own the wealth of this country will meet with political resistance, and not just through the ballot box.

This time because of the depth of the crisis, the Labour Party will be more than ever incapable of carrying out its manifesto.



# WORKERS

The idea of workers' control has been central to the principles of many left-wing organisations. It is now becoming a useful tool for both the established political parties and for the management. However in the mouths of these people the words "workers' control" are a screen for less acceptable proposals. In order to appreciate this fully, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what workers' control really means, and from where it sprang.

Firstly it should be recognised that there is a distinction between 'management' and 'control', - the functions of these may sometimes overlap, but they are essentially distinct. 'Management' is the state of affairs where the decisions are initiated and carried out by the same people, either individually or collectively. 'Control' means to supervise, inspect or check decisions, which are initiated by others. This implies either a limitation of workers' power or at least a duality of power. Obviously the latter will not suffice. What is needed is the situation where the working class as the collective producer takes all the fundamental decisions. This is done directly, through its own chosen organs, such as workers' councils, factory committees. These organs will consist of mandated, rotated and recallable delegates and should be federated on a regional and national basis. Therefore it is workers' self management that is needed, not just workers' control.

## RUSSIA 1917

The debate between these two can be most clearly seen in the events of the Russian Revolution, particularly between 1917 and 1921. During this time the issue of industrial administration was an effective indicator of the clashes of principles concerning the building of a new social order pattern.

In 1917 in Russia the economic base and the political supremacy of the industrial capitalists was shattered by a massive upsurge. The existing system of property relations was altered. However the characteristic authoritarian relations of production were not altered, and this is where the failure lay, because it gave an opening for new masters to replace the old ones. Why did it fail?

Confronted with workers' management, the owners had everything to lose, not only their ownership but also their privileges. Therefore it was a relief for them when the Revolution's leaders reversed the massive movements towards soviet power and decided to stop short with nationalisation and to retain the giving / taking of ord-

ers relationship in industry. Many saw the opportunity to regain their positions as managers of labour, albeit under a different title and they therefore either joined the Party or co-operated with it.

The revolutionary workers also had to deal with opposition from the reformist 'left', e.g. the Mensheviks and the right wing Socialist Revolutionaries. They regarded as 'utopian' or 'anarchist' any attempts by the workers to manage production.

The Bolsheviks also proved a problem. During the first months (March to October) they supported the Factory committees but afterwards turned against them, trying to incorporate them into a new union structure. This prevented the rapidly growing opposition to capitalist relations of production from coming to a head. Although the Bolsheviks helped to make a successful attack on the political power of the bourgeoisie, they also helped to restore 'law and order' in industry, which led to the consolidation of authoritarian relations once more in production. A young bureaucracy had begun to form within the Bolshevik party. Intellectuals began to dominate the committees and the Congress. These reasons, although superficial, may help to explain why the Bolshevik Party acted as it did.

A clear separation between the Bolsheviks and the masses began to appear. It had begun in 1905 when Soviets had begun to appear in many places independent of the Bolshevik Party. These party members who were favourable to the Soviets, only saw

We're all in the same boat,



them as, at best, auxiliaries for the Party - but there were many who were not even favourable. By 1917 it was evident that the Bolshevik Party was out of touch with what the workers and peasants really wanted. The leadership of the Party was firmly in the hands of professional revolutionaries - not the workers who gave it its strength and support. "A worker-agitator who shows any talent and is at all promising should not work in the factory". (Lenin, Sochineniya). This fundamental contradiction meant that any real move for workers' power would of necessity fail.

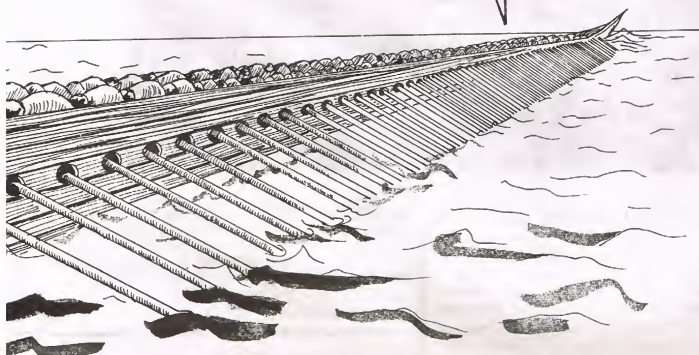
The workers themselves were unable to understand or realise what was happening to them. They could not find any effective way of achieving and keeping by themselves their objective of workers' self management. Therefore leaders arose and took over decision-making, thus reintroducing the same relationships as had been in effect previously. The Bolshevik road to bureaucracy was embarked upon. Because there was still a separation between the means of production and the producers there was still exploiters and exploited.

From this several lessons can be drawn. Firstly the working class organisation must be strong enough to take and keep the management of society. Secondly 'workers' power' must not at any time be equated with Party power.



# POWER?

But why do we always have to do the fucking rowing?



## EUROPE 1974

"Create an equal partnership between employers and employed in recognition of the equal importance of their contributions to the success of industry."

Liberal Manifesto

"In consultation with the unions, we shall take steps to make the management of existing nationalised industries more responsible to the workers in the industry and more responsible to their consumers' needs."

Labour Manifesto

The above quotes show that even the established parliamentary parties in Britain are considering the idea of "workers' participation" (a diluted form of workers' control). They have realised the advantages of advocating this kind of policy. Firstly as part of their election manifestoes, it would win them some support from the workers and trade unionists. Secondly as a policy, it would help to create a more stable work force. Proof of this can be seen in the existing scheme of "workers' participation" practised in W. Germany. This has been in progress since 1951 and despite some opposition from certain sections of both the unions and the working class as a whole, it has spread to most parts of industry. In reality it gives the workers very little, except a false sense of participation in the decisions made concerning their working life. However

this, coupled with other legislation aimed at raising the status and security of the working class, has ensured higher production and less strikes, to the benefit of the profit margins of the capitalists.

The European Commission has been working on proposals to introduce such a scheme throughout the Community. Industrialists in Britain have shown great interest in the progress and results of the scheme. Both Liberals and Labour have included something similar in their manifestoes. These facts should cause no real surprise. For if the scheme is as effective — for the W German capitalists — as it appears, then the working class in Britain can be certain that capitalists in this country will try to use it for their benefit too. Everyone knows how much money strikes lose for the bosses, therefore any way of preventing so many strikes will be welcomed to capitalists.

For this reason alone the working class must not be fooled into welcoming these schemes with open arms. If they are put into operation (i.e. imposed upon the workers) then they should be seen for what they are and used accordingly. As an instrument to help achieve a full takeover of production, the working class, they are to some extent 'useful'. They are not an end in themselves. These schemes seem to give the worker some say in what happens to him, but in reality they do not. In fact they can be and are used to divide the working class, both within individual

factories and throughout industry as a whole. Individual factories will be isolated by pressure being put on the workers to boost the industry in their own factories. A false consciousness of interest will be created, with workers being made to participate in company interest at the expense of class interest. This is an indication of how the working class will not be given "equal partnership" or have industries made "more responsible to the workers".

The ruling class are trying to bring in these schemes in order to suppress the militancy that is steadily growing among the working class. It would obviously benefit them to have a more "contented" workforce, less liable to strike or cause disruption. They will therefore be prepared, through such schemes as these and through other legislation, to "give in" to certain demands made by the working class. It is certain that any demand for "workers' participation" will be met in the way already described. We, the working class, must not be fooled by this.

We must continue to fight for real workers' self-management. This will mean having a strongly organised, united working class, who, once they have gained control of the means of production, will be able to keep it and to use it for the benefit of the whole working class. There must be no reliance on leaders even if they purport to represent the interests of the working class. History has shown that only the working class can properly represent its own interests. Any decisions should be made and carried out by the same people. Once working class self-management has been achieved it must be maintained by the practice of certain principles.

The only practical way of organisation will be to have regional groups that are federated to each other. Meetings of any groups, regional or national, will be open meetings, with speaking rights for all. At meetings that cannot be attended by everyone concerned, mandated delegates should be sent, who are liable to both rotation and recall. This is essential to prevent the building of another elite.



"Trades Union officials (to the Boy-Who-Would-Grow-Up): 'Here, I say, think of us. This Growth has got to stop'. (Dedicated to the Officials at Unity House and their pathetic efforts to check this modern tendency on the part of the Rank and File to outgrow Institutions.)"



# INDUSTRIAL MAFIA

The situation at Armstrong's factory in Beverley led Jean Jepson, sacked convenor at Armstrong's, to describe the businessmen's circle in Beverley as a Mafia at a meeting jointly sponsored by ORA in Hull.

She outlined the causes of the strike at Armstrong's. Seven years ago the union had negotiated an agreement with management whereby workers were paid for forty hours if they were laid off through external causes. When the three day week was imposed, management wanted to revoke this agreement and make the workers claim pay for non-working days from Social Security.

Jean Jepson says that she refused to sign away the agreement, whereupon she was first offered a financial inducement to leave (which she refused) and then was sacked (a) because she wouldn't sign the agreement, and (b) because she was 'sympathetic to the miners'. Eighty-nine workers then walked out. The T.G.W.U. officials became involved, and appealed to the Bridlington Tribunal against an unfair dismissal, against her wishes. Management was allowed to pick six members of the Tribunal, and Jean Jepson two. After a six hour meeting, during which neither Jean nor any of her supporters were allowed to speak, the voting to uphold her dismissal was six against two. The union fixed a deal with management whereby the strikers would go back (except Jean), and there would be no victimisation. Fifty workers returned to work. Jean was willing to take her appeal to the Industrial Relations Court, but her Union officials were unwilling, not due to any principled opposition but because it would bring to light some scandals concerning them and management.

An important point is that victimisation has occurred. Jean quoted an example. A striker had been fined £50 for an unrelated offence before the strike. He had paid off £30 of this, but during the strike fell behind with his payments. Two other Armstrong workers who were not on strike were caught robbing a safe in the factory. The two cases were heard on the



Sacked convenor addressing a factory gate meeting

same day. The magistrate asked the two safe-breakers if they were on strike. On hearing that they weren't, he gave them a conditional discharge and a fine. The man who had missed payment of his fine was asked by the magistrate if he was on strike. After saying that he was, he was given two sentences of 30 days to run consecutively. It was this that led Jean Jepson to say that the people who ran Beverley were a "businessmen's Mafia".

Due to the sell-out by T.G.W.U. officials of Jean's case many workers either drifted back to work or left the company. Only 20 were still out when Armstrong's called an election for a new convenor. A factory gate meeting was called, which fifty workers, half the work-force, attended. They agreed to boycott the election, hold a half-day strike, and call for the reinstatement of Jean Jepson. When they ret-

urned they found they had all been suspended for three days. Dockers in Hull are blacking all deliveries to Armstrong's, and the picketing of the factory continues.

In face of a reactionary management, union officials have played their usual role of selling out the workers under the disguise of a compromise. The union had ample warning of the threat to Jean Jepson when the management tried to sack her last year. But in this situation the workers have seen through their union and are pressing for strong action from the rank and file to make these officials totally responsible to the workers. Only through democratisation of unions and mandating of representatives can we ensure that these sell-outs are not repeated.

George Williams.

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## ORA GROUPS

If you think that the direct control by working people over all aspects of their lives is worth fighting for.  
If you think that what's needed now is independent rank and file organisation linking all aspects of working class struggle - in housing, schools, women's rights, in work, and all others.  
If you think that the independence of these organisations must be defended from takeover by the Labour traitors, union bureaucracies, and the 'NEW leaderships'.  
If you think that an organisation is needed which fights for revolutionary politics in everyday struggles but has no intention of seizing power for itself.  
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### LOCAL GROUPS.

Glasgow: Gordon Sykes, 32 Queen Elizabeth Square, Glasgow C3	Leeds: Rodger Walker, 98, Shakespeare Court, Leeds
Hull: Marion McCarmey, 13 Colman Street, Hull	Manchester: Alan Hughes, c/o 100 Oxford Road, Manchester
	North London:

York: Neil Hunt, 24 Moss Street, York.



# THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE

THE REACTIONARY TORY GOVERNMENTS ATTACK ON THE RIGHT TO PICKET BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE POWER OF THE STATE AND THE POLICE OVER OUR RIGHT TO ORGANISE. WE DEMAND THAT THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT ABOLISH ALL LAWS THAT DENY THE ORGANISATION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST THE SYSTEM THAT REPRESSIONS IT.

The laws which relate to picketing are vague, deliberately so. They are largely left to the discretion of the police and the courts. With collaboration between the police and bosses 'in defence of property' against workers who organise on any level, as at Shrewsbury, there is little doubt that the discretion favours the capitalist class.

The police possess the powers to smash all forms of picketing, for their powers include the removal of any obstruction of the highway and prevention of a 'reasonably anticipated breach of the peace. These two acts cover all forms of picketing. The police can then arrest workers for obstruction of the police in 'the execution of their duty'. As government measures aimed at repressing militancy, for example the Industrial Relations Act, are attacked with success by workers, the government will marshal the full force of the law, even using acts which have not been repealed but merely fall into disuse. The use of the nineteenth century law on conspiracy against the Shrewsbury building workers is an example of the ruling class's manipulation of ancient laws to crush militancy. It must be remembered that most British laws are never removed from the law books. Further more even on minor cases the courts are unlikely to reverse the decision of the police 'on the spot', as this would undermine our legal system.

Pickets then can be arrested for the following offences;

1. Trespass.
2. Assault and battery.
3. Public nuisance.
4. Intimidation.

These are all very discretionary.

5. Inducement to break contract. This is more complex. It means that if the pickets try to persuade a driver from crossing the their picket lines and stop him delivering they would be liable to arrest because



Police and pickets clash while scabs get through the lines

they are trying to get him to break his contract of employment with the suppliers of the goods.

So that's the law, which the ruling class will always interpret to their advantage. In the run-up to the miners' strike we saw how Carr, the Home Secretary under the Tories, and Gerard (Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police) prepared. They planned a national network of 'flying constabulary'. This coupled with planned detention centres where a large number of strikers can be dealt with. How long will it be before internment is deemed 'necessary' as in N.Ireland?

Carr and Mark (Metropolitan Police Commissioner) did not make the usual noises about their action being a defensive measure against intimidation. Strikers, if the bosses have their way, will not be allowed to approach lorries, occupy the road or pavement or shout at scabs. As a police superintendent says, '..... Any crowd opposed to one man is intimidation...but if the police are there between the crowd and the driver the intimidation is less.'

Police tactics for the miners' strike were formulated as early as November and with

the statements by Carr and Gerard, the desire of the ruling class to keep the supply lines open was clearly revealed.

Police collaboration with the bosses can be clearly seen in a small dispute at Laricol Plastics as early as 1971, at a factory in Acton. In a dispute where pickets were vital for the success of the strike the police said that no more than two pickets would be allowed at any one time. This was adhered to except when a number of scabs were due to start work. The police then arrested the strikers. Once again the police were 'carrying out the law'. There had been no shouting on the picket lines, no interference or obstruction; the charge was that of obstructing a police officer.

Thus it seems that even if we adhere to the law, we have no chance of winning against the army of the state. In a dispute involving a small firm as in the case of Laricol, it is easier for individuals to be victimised; if we make concessions to the law, then the law stamps on us harder.

The solution seems to be revealed in a recent statement by Carr, 'the police have no chance of dispossessing several hundred people', and in the Police Gazette remarks about the Saltely picket; 'it was common sense. You don't pick a fight with 10,000 people'.

The tactics of the government and police is to single out individuals, thus making them an example, e.g. the Shrewsbury pickets. The way to combat such move is to picket in large numbers where possible. The police will be forcing the confrontation; they have the choice of either breaking down, as at Saltely, or mass arrests of workers, and then the lines of class war will be clearly defined. The police will arrest workers if their action becomes too successful, and the police will be backed by the laws of the state.

The state will try to victimise individual pickets; united action is the way to fight this. Workers in all industries should unite in action for workers who are victimised. Strikes in small factories such as Laricol, need the support of the whole working class in the face of the opposition from the police and the state.

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE HAZARDS OF WORK by Patrick Kinnersley

Last year in Britain, 2,000 workers were killed in accidents at work; one million more contracted illnesses, ensuring that they die an early death. The vast majority of accidents are clearly the fault of the bosses. Safety laws have been broken or blatantly ignored; yet the factory inspectors are in the pay of the bosses. Average fines, for breaking industrial laws, are about £40 and no employer has yet gone to prison for endangering the life of or causing the death of, an employee. Workers at Shrewsbury have been jailed for allegedly 'threatening employers and their way of life', by helping to make the

national building workers' strike successful. Legislation clearly is not going to protect workers, for those who legislate are in league with the bosses, and workers must organise to fight for safe working conditions along with an improved standard of living. Last year in the United States, 5,000 workers at Shell struck from January to July, due to hazardous conditions of work and many more strikes would occur if workers were made aware of the dangers they confront at work.

The unions have ignored safety factors. Only four in Britain have safety officers. Productivity deals are made which increase health hazards. Piece work rates, for instance, do not pay workers to take safety precautions. In the chemical industry, productivity deals were made to cut the time spent changing clothes and cleaning after work, so that now workers go home covered in harmful chemicals; thus increased pay is offset by loss of good health.

Even death acts on a class basis. According to the Registrar General's figures deaths are divided into five social classes. When the working class reach forty their strength and speed decline parallel to their wages, whereas the professional sector of the population receive their maximum earnings at this age. By the time they are sixty-five, ten per cent of workers have retired, due to ill-health and one in three workers over sixty have bronchitis. The bosses will seek increased profits above all else, even if it entails the death of workers.

Workers must recognise these dangers and organise at shop floor level, to stop bosses using them as fodder to increase profits.

'The Hazards of Work; How to Fight Them'. by Patrick Kinnersley. Pluto Press, Spencer Court, Chalcut Rd London NW1.



# ★★ RED CLYDE SIDE ★★

A major tactic of the ruling class in keeping power has been to suppress and distort the history of working class struggles. One of the tasks of a revolutionary organisation is to recall the history of working class militancy and to point out the lessons to be learnt from past struggles.

In the years before and during the 1st World War, the industrial areas of Scotland were subject to a great amount of socialist agitation. It was on the Clyde that the Shop Stewards Movement originated. Towards the end of 1914, with the close of a three year agreement, the Glasgow district committee of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (which evolved into the AUEW) demanded a 2d per hour pay rise.

This demand was turned down and an overtime ban started. Then a strike in 26 factories over the 2d issue erupted, and ten thousand engineers came out. The district committee backed down and persuaded the men to go back to work after a fortnight.

During the strike a group came together which acted as a co-ordinating body between the various factories. This was known as the Clyde Labour Withholding Committee (CLWC). It was an unofficial body and developed as a reaction against the betrayal by the district committee, and it was composed mainly of shop stewards who had already worked together in a local vigilance committee. The CLWC grew into the Clyde Workers Committee (CWC).

The CWC sought to increase the number of shop stewards in the factories and to try to change the workshop organisation from a craft basis to a class basis. Workshop committees elected by the workers were set up and were answerable to them, and convenors of shop stewards emerged, who had the right to move from department to department.

## LEADERS SELL OUT

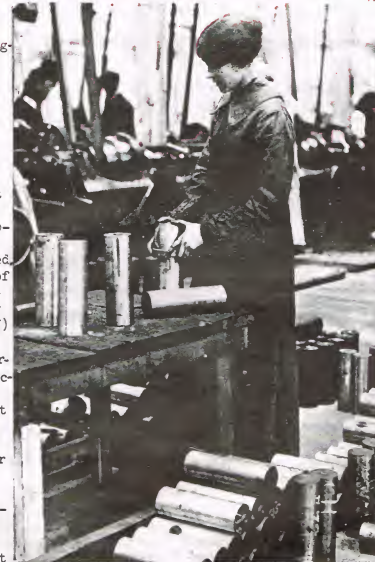
Through their struggles, the Clydeside workers realised the inadequacies of the official union leadership, and the need for independent rank and file organisation to oppose the union bureaucracy when they backed down over issues.

During 1915 and 1916, 250 to 300 delegates met every week - from the mines, the railways, the co-op workers, as well as engineering and shipbuilding. New methods of organisation were developing.

At the same time, the bosses were applying new policies. They centralised everything under the state, sped up industry and incorporated the unions into the state apparatus in order to effectively silence the workers under the excuse of the war efforts.

They began to introduce 'dilution' of labour - where unskilled workers were moved into the factories. This was a preparation for military conscription where the skilled working class would be creamed off into the army, being replaced by women, to whom the bosses could pay a lot less.

The Clyde Workers' Committee led a consistent campaign against dilution and also against rent rises (with a spectacular and successful rent strike). The bosses replied against the rising militancy with the suppression of various socialist newspapers, including the moderate ILF 'Forward'.



Woman munitions worker after the 'Dilution of Labour'

broke up its presses and suppressed its paper. On March 17 1916, a strike flared up over the forbidding at the Parkhead Forge of a convenor visiting the different sections. The Government had eight leading stewards arrested and 'deported' from Clydeside.

It should be noted here that the CWC did nothing to extend the strike. It had been created at a particular point of struggle - now, like the union executive, it was backing down. Willie Gallagher, who a few weeks before was talking about revolution, ruled the motion from rank and file workers to declare a strike on Clydeside out of order. This from a man who called himself an Anarchist and Syndicalist!

This brilliantly illustrates the inadequacy of shop-steward organisations when a struggle develops and escalates, and the need for a mass assembly of workers, rather than uncontrolled delegates, to advance and voice the workers' struggle.

The Clyde movement was thus effectively crushed, aided by the imprisonment of leading socialist militants, e.g. John McLean.

But the Russian Revolution raised new hopes among the working class. A new militancy emerged, and grew over Britain. In 1919, the demand for a forty-hour week emerged. The Clyde Workers Committee, together with the joint committee of the local unions, launched a campaign.

Here again it showed its inadequacy by a) working with the union committees, being bound by collaboration with them, rather than by pushing for independent action bypassing the unions; and b) by not spreading the movement beyond the Clyde. This despite the fact that it was represented on the National Committee of Shop Stewards and by the fact that rank and file activity was spreading everywhere.

60,000 workers came out; a massive demonstration was held in George Square, Glasgow. Next day the Scottish TUC called a General Strike. Mass pickets moved from factory to factory calling people out.

Singers Sewing Machine Factory (scene of pre-war syndicalist militancy) and the miners struck. It should be remembered that the unions were forced into this situation by grass-roots militancy.

The strike spread to Belfast where thousands stopped work. On February 1st, a demonstration assembled to hear what the Lord Provost of Glasgow would do about appealing to the Government. But on the instructions of Whitehall, he had mobilised a police force, whilst troops, machine guns and tanks were being sent up!

The police charged into the crowd, batons swinging. Gallagher and Kirkwood, leading lights of the CWC were clubbed to the ground. The workers began to fight back; they tore up iron railings and threw them at the police. They seized a lorry and used broken bottles as weapons. The police were forced back.

The Riot Act was read, and Gallagher, Kirkwood and Emmanuel Shinwell (then a quite different person to his later years) were arrested. During the night, thousands of soldiers were moved into the city centre - (English troops - not Scottish ones whose loyalty was doubted). Tanks and machine guns were positioned everywhere.

Winston Churchill, the Home Secretary, told the Cabinet: "By going gently at first, we should get the support we want from this nation, and then troops can be used more effectively."

The General Strike collapsed. Union leadership backed down, the CWC were in jail and the workers, whose methods of struggle were not sufficiently advanced, retreated. The action lacked the support of the Triple Alliance of Miners, transport workers, and railway men, which could have gained if the strike had been started a few weeks later.

The lessons to be drawn from this failure are obvious - that a national mass movement was necessary, a rank and file capable of combatting the bosses who would be prepared to go to any lengths to maintain power.

The present increase in army and police co-operation, e.g. N. Ireland, Heathrow and the increased recruiting of special constables, shows that the ruling class is now as willing to use force against the working class militancy as it did in Clydeside.

Nick Hillier.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE O.R.A. write to 24 Moss St, York  
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# libertarian struggle



**P.R.O.P. — THE FUTURE?**

- **STATE KILLS TOWN**
- **WELFARE STATE ABOLISHED**

**NF - Nazi Front • Student Grants • Travellers Tales • Watered beer exposed • <sup>th</sup>f • Football militants?**

# TRAVELLERS TALES

There was a time when minority groups were persecuted. Nowadays they are helped to overcome their inability to fit in'. An example of this benevolent paternalism is the treatment of the British travellers (the collective name preferred by gypsies, didcois, Romanys, tinkers etc.).

Following the war most of the travellers traditional stopping places were fenced in by property developers and local councils. A comprehensive system of legal penalties forced the travellers to keep moving or park illegally. Then the state discovered the problem of 'gypsies'. Without realising how the problem had arisen they set out to 'solve' it.

They began with the 1968 Caravan Sites Act which required local authorities to provide camp sites for travellers in their areas. They were allowed to evade their responsibility if they could prove shortage of land or that there were no travellers in their area.

Few authorities have not pleaded one of these excuses. The gross underestimation which many local authorities made of their traveller population in the preliminary survey in 1967 helped them to pretend there were no travellers in their area. Even when the physical presence of travellers in an area has been proved, the councils often claim they have come into their territory from somewhere else. When all else fails they fall back on spurious ethnic theories. Strangely none of these people seem to have met any 'real gypsies'.

Having defined the travellers in their areas as 'human rejects' they then initiate 'solutions' to fit these 'rejects': by forced assimilation complete with welfare workers (Hampshire) or settlement on grubby plots of land in derelict areas of town. Many sites have rules designed to destroy travellers' cultural habits, dogs and open fires are forbidden, work areas are non-existent, travellers and children are instructed in table manners.

## ABOUT 'LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE'

This paper is written and produced by people all over the country, who are active in their trade unions, tenants' associations, claimants' unions, women's liberation groups, schools and universities.

We are united by our membership of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists - a democratically organised group which believes in a socialist revolution, but a revolution brought about, and firmly controlled, by the majority of the working people. We work to encourage contacts and understanding between the different aspects of working class struggle.

We oppose all groups and parties who take the initiative and control of their struggle from ordinary people. We think that the way forward to a better society is not through any kind of 'new' leadership, but through working people discovering their own history, their own ability to organise themselves, their confidence in themselves and their mates.

As part of our attempt to put this kind of politics into practice, we have rotating editorship of each issue. This issue was edited by Hull. Numbers 1 and 2 were edited by Leeds and North London respectively.

We are producing this paper (none of us are professional journalists) to provide one means of spreading some hidden facts, of publicising what workers are thinking and doing, to workers in other industries and other parts of the country, to talk about what claimants, women, immigrants, pensioners and schoolkids are doing, and how these battles can't be separated.

We won't give you the familiar crap of 'this is your paper', 'without this paper the working class is leaderless' etc. What we do say is that if you want to USE this paper - to pass on things you've learnt, to ask for help from other people, or just to make contact with others in a similar situation, then please do so. We know that lots of people have no practice at writing articles - but who needs literary genius? We promise to improve its appearance as we get more practised. The contents are up to you so please write to us, whether its an article or a letter.

## EVICITION IN HULL

The recent events in Orchard Park Hull, are a case of the conflict between travellers and the authorities. The 1972 Act gives the local residents in any area the power to stop the creation of a site for travellers in their area, and this power has been used frequently by right-wing groups to stir up anti-minority feeling.

The travellers in Hull have historically been a winter community, moving to the agricultural areas of Yorkshire in the summer for work. Hull City Council used this seasonal movement on 7th August 1972 to move the two families of travellers who were staying the summer, from a long established site in Kathleen Street, Hull, even though these families had paid rent promptly for four years. The site was allocated for industrial development. Another group were thrown off a site in Chamberlain Road and then off West Carr Lane, which was again allocated for industrial development. This left the travellers with no official site, and the Authorities managed to put off any action by a wrangle between Hull Council and East Riding Council about whose responsibility they were. Hull has claimed that 'there are no gypsies in the city' (there are roughly two hundred at present) and that the travellers 'really belonged to the agricultural areas'. This delaying manoeuvre is failing with the formation of the Humberside County which will include East Riding, the main centre of summer employment for the travellers.

The case for a temporary official site at Midldyke Lane, Orchard Park is obvious, for it is a long established site, the travellers are sending their children to the local school, and are tending not to travel in families to their summer jobs, and instead are going daily to work on the farms. The inevitable campaign has received the usual publicity, and been over emphasised by the local politicians, vociferously led by Patrick Wall, Monday Club MP. In fact as few as fifty people turned up at the Orchard Park meeting, of whom many were not opposed to the travellers. Instead of improving the sites for the travellers, the politicians see them as a means of increasing their local popularity by organising an emotional campaign.

An example of this was at Dunswell Lane, a proposed official site, where as a result of such a campaign the proposal was referred to the government and after being delayed for eighteen months was turned down.

An argument used against the Midldyke Lane site has been that there are only two or three authentic traveller families, the rest being scrap dealers operating illegally (Registration of Scrap Metal Dealers 1954 Act). As it happens they are all one family group - a fact which the local authority is only prepared to recognise when they want to prosecute.

Patrick Wall in fact does not mind 'the two or three REAL 'gypsy' families', but he does not like 'the drop-outs from society who are unwilling to live by conventional values'. Actually at Midldyke the scrap is only relatively minor work.

An illustration of Patrick Wall's viciousness was his proposal for a permanent site for all travellers on either derelict Hull docks, presumably so that the ponies could enjoy the concrete pastures; or on the banks of the Humber at Hessele foreshore where they could contract swamp fever.

What the Hull travellers demand are:

- (1) Legally protected sites.
- (2) Retention of kinship groups on their traditional sites, Midldyke, Woodhill.
- (3) Improvement of site facilities, i.e. stables sanitation, electricity site centres, tarmac areas for caravans and work.
- (4) Land allocation for grazing.
- (5) End to restrictions on scrap dealing.



NO SANITATION, NO RUNNING WATER. BIGOTS LIKE PATRICK WALL REFUSE THE TRAVELLERS ALL FACILITIES AND THEN ATTACK THEIR LIFESTYLE.

# PACK 'EM OUT!

At Everton Football Club there are the beginnings of a revolt. Not the usual boardroom revolt or mutterings among the players, but an almost unheard of event - a supporters revolt. On March 3rd Everton were at home to local rivals Liverpool, and lost; after the game supporters handed round leaflets complaining about Everton's failure to score even one goal in their last eight games, criticising the sloppiness of tight-knitted Harry Catterick, the manager, and demanding that he be removed. The leaflet was spuriously signed 'B.Clough'. The supporters who produced the leaflet have broken one of the best-kept rules in British soccer - that soccer fans should behave as if they were completely powerless, and should do no more than an pay and applaud.

Soccer, for years, has been one of the slums of the British entertainment world. The rich (directors and managers) have had an almost unchallenged dictatorship. Players have usually been forced to behave as well-paid puppets. And the supporter is treated even more patronisingly than a politician treats the electorate. The manager of Derby County, Brian Clough, stated publicly earlier this season that a spectators job was to cheer and not to be critical! Can you imagine someone elsewhere in the entertainment racket, for example a theatre manager, claiming that the audience should just clap and not be critical? But, theatre audiences are largely from the vocal middle-classes who know their rights, whereas football spectators are mostly

working class people. What supporters say they want is largely ignored: the Arsenal fans can stand and chant for as long as they like for Marinello and Charlie George to be brought into the team - it's usually in vain. No player is brought into the team except by command of the manager, Bertie Mee, he of the cultured voice and authoritative tone. And if a supporter wakes up to find that his favourite player is about to be, or has been, transferred, the traditional reaction has been that there's absolutely nothing the supporter can do about it.



A BIG MONEY GAME - BUT WHO PAYS?

The lack of influence of soccer spectators is very surprising, and could easily be ended - because the spectator provides almost the entire income of every large football club. For example when Arsenal did the double in 1970/71 almost all their income - £604,083 of it, according to the annual report of Arsenal F.C.Ltd - came from gate receipts. (Arsenal seem to have made a profit of £161,518 that year: whatever became of it?) Most football clubs make a far smaller profit; for instance in 1970 Spurs after paying a low dividend (5%) on a few shares had only £14,120 left from the year's takings, and in 1972 Everton's profit was so low - £7,155 - that no dividend was declared at all. This in spite of Spurs and Everton having large crowds even by First Division standards. The profit after tax of most clubs is so small that if spectators were ever to organise a boycott on even two matches running they could bring most managements to their knees. (The average takings from one First Division match are between £10,000 and £15,000). And if many supporters showed signs of demanding control over their clubs - as is now beginning to happen at Everton - managers and directors, who have nearly always been in unquestioned control, might be shocked into some very fruitful and interesting overreactions.

'Radicalise the soccer fans? Ludicrous,' says the Marxist computer: 'Soccer divides the working class.' Well, soccer does to some extent: but at the moment the soccer bosses are in effect teaching the (usually working class) spectators that over an important area of their lives they cannot and should not have any control. And the habit of putting up with that sort of domination is always worth breaking.

The group editing this edition of the paper would like to thank this contributor, who has raised some interesting points. Any further letters on this subject will be welcomed.



# STATE KILLS TOWN

Hartlepool is a typical medium sized north-eastern town. Historically, the main sources of employment have been the steel works, the docks and the coal mines. Along with the rest of the North it was hit by the inter-war depression. Frequently 30% and more of the male work-force were out of work in that period. This has created an attitude which the State calls 'work shy'. When unemployment drops below 5% (which isn't often) the local employers start bemoaning the shortage of labour. Long periods of unemployment are an excellent antidote for the Protestant work ethic, and there are many examples of local men in their fifties and sixties whose only period of employment since leaving school was during the Second World War. The so-called boom of the 1950's came to Hartlepool only in terms of higher profits for the local firms. Unemployment remained high and wages remained low. As late as 1965, the basic forty hour wage for a labourer at Expanded Metal, one of the large local employers was £9 5s 10d.



THE MURDER OF THE MINES

The North Eastern coalfield had a history of militancy. It was a group of miners from neighbouring Northumberland who derailed the Flying Scotman during the 1926 General Strike, and were then hidden by the local villagers from the Special Branch for over six months. The annual 'Big Meet' of miners in Durham City attracted crowds of over a quarter

of a million well into the 1960's. Alf Robens' recognition of the workers' solidarity came in the shape of closure notices for more than half the pits in Durham. Fifty thousand men were 'made available for other employment.' Result: unemployment up, wages down.



THE DEATH OF THE DOCKS

Sir William Gray was the first mayor of Hartlepool, and his family had run the docks ever since. During the Second World War a 'cost plus' system was operated by the State, under which shipbuilding firms were paid the cost of materials and labour plus 10% 'to cover overheads'. Willam Gray's, as their contribution to the war effort, used this opportunity to build up a huge stockpile of surplus materials paid for by the State. Of course, every other firm was doing the same while the workers, as usual, were doing the fighting. In the post-war boom in shipping, Gray's were able to use these supplies to reap huge profits without any of the nonsense about new plant or machinery. By the 1960's, the modernised yards of Japan and West Germany were building ships quicker and cheaper. By the winter of 1962, the present Sir William Gray decided things had gone far enough. No, he didn't invest his profits in a big improvement programme. Virtually overnight he put his company into liquidation, bought a country mansion near Richmond, and retired there with his family. Three thousand Hartlepool men were made available for other employment. Result: unemployment up (to 14%), wages down.



THE STRANGLING OF THE STEELWORKS

In the 1960's, new hope came to Hartlepool. A huge new steel plant was to be built on the south side of the town. Of course it would be out of date before it was completed, but it seemed that the job future was assured. The main union in the steel works, the grandly titled 'British Iron, Steel, And Kindred Trades Association' (BISAKTA) is notoriously weak and allowed incredible differentials to build up. While a few men were highly paid, these were the men who were working over sixty hours a week. (The local saying was that they 'put more hours in than the Town Hall clock'.) In 1970, the local International Socialists circulated a report which said that the Steelworks was to be closed down. The leader of the local Tory Council, Councillor Tommy Andrews, said that the steelworks was secure for 'many decades to come'. In 1971, five hundred men were paid off. In 1972 the Labour MP for the town, Ted Leadbitter, said that negotiations were under way which would 'make Hartlepool 'the largest steel centre in the North East.' In 1973, the head of the British Steel Corporation Lord Melchitt, announced that he'd chosen Redcar instead of Hartlepool, and that no more steel would be made in Hartlepool after 1975. Over the country, the new plans mean that 30,000 men, 15% of the labour force will lose their jobs. Sir David Davies, head of the steel unions, said, 'the unions do not feel they can logically oppose modernisation of the industry.' Meanwhile the union bosses felt they should cooperate with the governments 'task forces'. Sir David was forced by demonstrating steelworkers to leave the union conference by the back door. (Is that how to get a knighthood?) For Hartlepool this means that over three thousand men will be available for other employment. Result???

Hartlepool last year won the 'Britain in Bloom' competition. If you can't grow jobs, grow flowers?

Hartlepool is one of the leading towns for recruitment to the armed forces.

## HAVE YOU HEARD?

According to a survey conducted by 'Which' on the different methods of contraception used in Britain, 1% reported that they used contraception but described the methods used as 'other'. As these methods were not included under sections on the pill, condoms, withdrawal, use of safe period, cap, suppositories, douches, creams, pastes, jellies, foams or even prolonged lactation, one wonders what 'other' methods of contraception are available!!

A little research turns up such delights as 'American Tips' and 'Creolian Caps' - both types of glans condom which are considered very unsafe as they are liable to slip off or be too constricting. Not for you? Then how about using a 'Gamic Appliance' - obtainable by post only. This turns out to be a male internal contraceptive and consists of a short stiff rubber stem 1 1/2 inches long attached to a small thin rubber bag about 2 inches long. One is instructed to smear the rubber stem with contraceptive paste and then insert down the urethra of the penis. When the climax occurs the rubber bag is said to unfold 'rather like a parachute'. Happy landings! (NOT recommended as the method can cause infection and damage.)

Still not sure which method to try? How about the 'Poor Man's Friend'? This has an appearance similar to a washable sheath but is of thicker rubber and can be used either as a sheath or as a cervical cap. Whose turn is it tonight?

The piece of resistance, however, must surely be the 'Capote Anglaise' - described in the catalogue as 'Ladies Own Sheath'. This is in fact, a rubber lining for the vagina and is held in place by an sinifilled rim. It is described as VERY safe - but surely not much fun!

Seriously, though, why is it that people use these unusual and sometimes dangerous methods of contraception? Why are there no truly safe, completely reliable, widely publicised, and easy to use methods of contraception available? Quite simply, the drug companies do not waste money on researching new methods where the product has no future potential for producing massive profits - hence research on such developments as the once-a-month pill suffers from lack of financial backing. Another line of research currently being examined is that of immunising women against human sperm, making it possible for them to be pregnancy proof until they take a positive decision to have a child, and not vice versa. This too lacks any major financial support.

Even our sex lives are ultimately controlled by the Government and Big Business in the cause of fat profits

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**Sheffield:**  
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There are also contacts in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Leicester, London Universities Federation, East London, South London, West London, Norwich, Oakham, Oxford, Plymouth, Poole, Southampton, Southend, Swansea and Wellington. If you want to be put in touch, write to the National Secretary, c/o North London group to whom all enquiries about ORA should be addressed.

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# PRO.P : PAST & PRESENT

This article was written by a member of PROP who is not a member of the O.R.A. "Libertarian Struggle" exists to be used by members of any community or working class rank and file group. If you want to comment on this article, on PROP or anything else in this or past issues, or if you want to use the paper to tell about and get some help for any struggle you are involved in - send an article or a letter to the address on the back page.

PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners), as you are almost certain to know, was officially announced to the public on May 11th 1972 at a press meeting opposite Pentonville Prison. The aims of PROP then were to campaign for a better deal than prisoners were getting at that time.

There were five ex-prisoners on the executive, Dick Pooley, national organiser, Doug Curtis press officer, Ted Ward London organiser, and two women Mona and Pauline. Everything went fine for a while as members of PROP started spreading the word and the true facts about the conditions in Prison. When word got back inside prison through the radio, television and newspapers, more and more prisoners started to send out information of what was actually happening to them. Small sit-ins started in different prisons and wherever possible and practicable, members from PROP were outside with banners to support them. The authorities were informed that unless something was done pretty quickly there would be a prison strike on a large scale and, of course, they laughed at PROP. Nothing at all was done. Instead things were getting worse, the weather was getting warmer, the prisons more overcrowded, and the men more irritable.

The date for the prison strike was given as August 4th 1972. PROP called for support from the so-called left wing groups to be outside Gartree, the top security prison near Leicester, the inmates of which we knew for certain were going to be behind us on August 4th. On the morning about twenty PROP members turned up; other groups who profess to be concerned with change inside prison, didn't think it important enough to turn out in support. While we were outside Gartree with our banners the Assistant Governor saw fit to come out and talk to the television interviewers saying that there was no unit and that all the men were working as usual. While he was making his statement a big cheer went up in the prison and out of the windows of the wing came banners reading 'we support PROP' and '24 hour shut down', all day long we heard over the radio that more and more prisons were taking part. It went beyond all our wildest dreams because as other prisoners heard over the radio what was happening they were spontaneously joining the strike. At the end of the day the Home Office admitted that 27 prisons and 4,000 prisoners had taken part in the demonstration. We bought the papers the next day and compared what the Home Office admitted and what different papers actually saw for themselves. By going over

prisons in helicopters and other means they counted 33 prisons and over 10,000 prisoners taking part.

We must make clear that during the strike demonstration there was not one act of violence and Mark Carlisle, Under Secretary at the Home Office, made a public statement saying that where there were passive demonstrations no disciplinary action was to be taken. But of course this was not so; whole prisons were put on mile forty three - where men are locked up for twenty three hours a day. Prisoners could not understand it. In Wandsworth Prison men were brutally beaten. One woman visiting her husband there happened to mention PROP in the hearing of a prison officer, and her husband was dragged out in front of her and other witnesses and severely beaten. When she saw him again a few days later he also had a rope burn mark round his neck which the prison officers had made. She tried to get her own doctor in to see him but of course was told that this could not be allowed, so a few of the wives got together to decide what they could do to help their husbands who could do nothing for themselves. They came along to PROP in London for advice. As a result five women started a demonstration outside the prison and PROP went along to support them. In five weeks the wives got 900 signatures, addresses and telephone numbers on a petition to end the brutality in Wandsworth.

By this time the group had grown in number to about thirty wives and more members of PROP were helping, but still not one representative from the so-called left wing groups was involved. When it looked as though the wives had the signature of every visiting wife and relative of Wandsworth, they presented a copy to the Governor and then they and PROP members marched to the Home Office and 10 Downing Street to hand in other copies. They were told that the matter would be looked into. Though the media had printed a story about the brutal treatment the prisoner had sustained, the Prison Officers Association and the Home Office never denied that the incident had taken place. When after three months we inquired why the Home Office had not answered, the reply was that they did not have a name and address to write to. We pointed out that there were 900 names and addresses on the petition and the Home Office reply was - 'Oh!'

In late August Albany had a violent demonstration and other prisoners took to the roof tops in support of them as far north as Aberdeen and South as Wales, where one man was due for release that day but refused to come down off the roof top.

These demonstrations went on for many days during which Mike Fitzgerald a young Cambridge student took over the job of press officer from Doug Curtis who was away on holiday abroad. When Doug eventually returned to find PROP coping successfully with the situation without him, he called a press conference to announce his resignation as Press Officer and withdrew his membership from PROP. He sold out 40,000 prisoners by attempting to break PROP through the media.

ping to break PROP through the media.

The Home Secretary, who returned from Corfu over the problems of Asian immigration and prison unrest, realised that although PROP had a lot of support inside prison, it was very thin on the outside because of the apathy of the left who prefer talk to action except where it doesn't directly involve them. Mention Vietnam, N.Ireland, South Africa and there are thousands on the march, but when people in their own back yard are being repressed as they are in prison it doesn't seem to have the same glamour. So the prisoners were sold out by the left too, and Robert Carr was able to discipline nearly 2,000, some losing up to 300 days remission.



In London we saw our mistakes and the group decided that we would have to do something about them. We had long discussions and came to the conclusion we were doing what we had accused other groups of doing and that was working too intensely in our own little field. So we went out into the community of North London and now have people working in community projects. A few of us work with old age

pensioners and even formed a pensioners support group with Task Force, Claimants Unions, two Social Service teams and a tenants association, to get better treatment for the old. We have been pressurising the Social Services Committee to throw open public buildings to the old. North London and Enfield Polytechnics have agreed to open their facilities to the pensioners. We have people working in youth clubs with the young kids who are working their way towards prison. The club leaders didn't want to know these kids and in some cases were turning the kids out of the club back onto the street where they were originally getting into trouble. So who could be better than the ex-con who has been through the system and found it is no good to anybody, to try and straighten the kids out? These youngsters seem to be responding to this PROP menber.

I believe PROP groups all over the country should try working with people in the community, i.e. prisoners wives, one parent families, old age pensioners and in particular the people on supplementary benefit. We must improve conditions outside before we can improve conditions inside otherwise what we do is make prisons so acceptable that people might prefer to be in prison. We must always keep in mind that no matter how bad prison conditions are, a man has a roof over his head and three meals a day and no responsibility. No one can be sure that his wife and children have the same, as most wives are placed in a social prison far worse than that of her husband when she hasn't committed any so-called crime against society. We all exist in some kind of prison whether it be physical or psychological, financial or social. It's no use breaking down concrete walls if we cannot break down the other kind built by attitudes. This must be of prime importance to PROP if we are going to be effective in the future.

## ARMLEY CENTRE

After several months of careful background work by various local people, including members of Women's Lib and ex-members and sympathisers of an abortive Leeds branch of PROP, as well as several other interested people, a fully furnished house next to the jail wall has just opened in Armley, Leeds. This house serves as a local centre for visitors to inmates of the prison to use, either when waiting before or after visiting hours (1.30pm to 3.30pm each day) or as a creche during the actual visit.

The house is being rented from Leeds City Council for 50p a week, and is situated in a clearance area. Many of the houses in the street are already empty and boarded up, and the few remaining inhabitants are waiting to leave as soon as possible. Although at first unsure of what was happening at the house, they are now in full support and have been very helpful during the preliminary stages, even going so far as to bring the volunteers meeting there cups of coffee until the cooker was fixed up in the house. The house was furnished by volunteers and by the local people giving stuff they no longer wanted to take to the new places they got under the clearance scheme.

The house was set up to provide a local centre and help to relieve some of the many problems faced by the families of prisoners - the people the State ignores when it serves its 'just' punishment. The house opened for the first time on Sat. 10th March. Reaction to it was very favourable, and about 40-50 people used the place on its opening day. It was publicised by handing out leaflets to every one going up the private road that leads to the prison gate. One woman said that if she won the pools she would give it all to the house as it was such a marvellous thing and one which the community was very glad of.

It had been hoped that the prison officer at the gate would distribute the leaflets but, for the time being, the prison authorities are playing a waiting game to see how the house is received and what tactics its organisers indulge in. Sunday visiting is very quiet, as only convicted prisoners are allowed visitors, but

this may change as news of the facilities of the house spreads through the community.

At present, the house is only open on Saturdays and Sundays, from 10.30am until 4.00pm. The intention is to have a person living on the premises as soon as possible so that the place can be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the moment the local community - containing quite a few prisoners wives, past and present - is tacitly supporting the idea. They are a little cautious about working with middle class 'do-gooders' - a very understandable reaction.

If the house is successful, it is planned to open other houses. Its hoped that these will be furnished and used for creches/coffee bars/ chat centres/advice centres/ dormitories for overnight and other visitors or even homeless prisoners.

Unfortunately, the volunteers organising the house have recently split into two camps. Most of us have the intention of setting up the place, and then withdrawing so that the prisoners/wives can take over control of their own centre. We have no intention of retaining any kind of formal committee but merely aiding a self-help project to get well and truly off the ground. However, some of the liberal 'do-good' types one usually finds associated with this kind of community action have gerrymandered the election of a committee, and voted in, at a poorly attended (and almost secret) meeting, a constitution that precludes any control whatsoever by the people for whom the place is intended. They seem to be intent on becoming permanent 'committee members' with a vastly inflated sense of self-importance. They have even organised a joint meeting with the WVS, the probation service and the prison authorities! Yet another social work agency imposed on the people for their own good.

This committee and constitution are a complete opposite of the beliefs held by many of the volunteers, and are a strategy that must be fought in the next few meetings. The self-interested clique were able to carry out their plan because of the informal and structureless nature of the meetings that were held. This is a failing of many libertarian groups. We must be aware of the danger.



PROP demonstration outside Leeds prison.  
( Mr. Dick Pooley is in the foreground. )



# WOULD YOU CREDIT IT?— LOSS OF THE FAMILY ALLOWANCE

I get it out every Tuesday, regularly as clock-work', says a mother when talking of Family Allowance. She continues, 'I rely on my Family Allowance. I'd be right down the pan without it, wouldn't I? I'd be right short of money.' Another mother comments, 'if Family Allowance was in the pay packet, that'd be a different story - half the husbands wouldn't give it up.'

Just two comments on the discussion at present centring on the Government's Green Paper 'Proposals for a Tax Credit System', published in October 1972. This puts forward a proposal for a radical change in the tax system, but, beneath layers of bureaucratic jargon, has several dangerous implications for the working class and especially women.

Many different groups are campaigning on aspects of the Green Paper, although most concentrate on only one issue and hence call themselves Family Allowance Campaign groups. Activities such as the collection of signatures on petitions, local leafletting, producing local surveys of information, street theatre, even a play, have all been undertaken to bring to people's attention the issue of the abolishing of the Family Allowance as presented in the Green Paper.

(6) EMPLOYERS should be responsible for paying credits to all employees whose credit cards they hold, CREDITS COULD NOT BE CUMULATIVE, so if you miss a payment, for any reason, such as being on strike, you would lose that week's credit for ever.

(7) Last, but not least, the Government assumes throughout the paper that child credits (child's tax allowance and family allowance) would be paid to the FATHER in his wage packet, and not the mother at the Post Office as at present.

Arguments such as 'administrative expense' and the problems of fathers finding their take-home pay reduced are put forward as reasons for not paying child credits to mothers. The Paper accepts that child credits paid to the father 'may not reach the wife' but say that women in this situation are 'relatively few in number'. A survey carried out by Birmingham Women's Liberation Group found that nearly 40% of women at present receiving Family Allowance felt they would not see this money if paid to the husband, and 50% of those who would be eligible for child credits under the



Although there are many other minor points contained in it which hit the hardest the same sector of society - the lowest; the main features of the Green Paper are as follows:

- (1) The system of 'tax credits' would replace the main income tax personal allowance and family allowances (thus combining what you gain on the roundabout with what you lose heavily on the swings.)
- (2) Such tax credits would be available only to 9 out of 10 people, such as people in regular work, people getting regular national insurance (sick pay) or unemployment pay, and to retirement pensioners. The 1 in 10 not covered by the scheme include some of the most vulnerable groups in society - the temporarily unemployed, the self-employed, people earning less than £8 per week, students, people dependent on supplementary benefits. These people have to have alternative inconvenient arrangements made for them.
- (3) Income would be taxed at 30% and against this a credit rating would be set. If your credit is due is greater than your tax payable, you are given the difference by your employer, and if the tax comes to more than the credit the difference is paid in tax.
- (4) Credits are proposed at £4 for a single person, £6(1) for a married couple, and £2 for each child. The child credit includes the present tax allowance for children, plus the Family Allowance.
- (5) National Insurance benefits which are tax free at the moment - unemployment, sickness and injury benefits, maternity allowances and invalid pensions - become taxable at the rate of 30%. Although supplementary benefit would not be taxed, it wouldn't give any entitlement to a credit either.

new scheme felt they would not receive the money. Relatively few in number indeed!

The implications of these proposals, however, are more sinister. The Government is proposing to abolish Family Allowance altogether and this is, in quite a lot of cases, THE ONLY MONEY A WOMAN RECEIVES AS OF RIGHT REGULARLY EACH WEEK. It can often be the only source of income that is completely reliable, and it can be saved up until there is sufficient for some major expenditure - new shoes or clothes for the children. The Government is proposing to take away this statutory right and replace it with 'grace and favour' money which involves means testing in order to get it. The present Family Allowance is already woefully inadequate (90p for the second child and £1 for the third and subsequent children) so how many people are going to be willing to submit to grovelling for it??? As with the Family Income Supplement, the Government will then announce, with great surprise, that many 'poor' people are failing to take up rightful money, and can therefore manage without it. The truth is, of course, that the people most intimidated by Government officials, forms, and offices are precisely those who most need such pittances.

A Child Poverty Action Group survey found that most low income families spend the Family Allowance on food, so that failure by the husband to qualify for, or hand over, the child credit would result in a lower standard of living for many poorer families. This proposal also weights the balance of power in the household even more heavily in favour of the man - he will control EVERY SINGLE PENNY of the family's income.

All families on supplementary benefit and all outside the categories of those in work or getting National Insurance payments would

have no right to child credits. Unsupported mothers, wives of students, and all those who don't fit into the Government's arbitrarily designed categories of those 'worthy' of automatic payment would lose the only statutory income they have.

Another implication of these proposals is that all those on supplementary benefit would become TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE DEPT. OF SOCIAL SECURITY - what a thought! If there are delays in getting payments or supplementary benefit is stopped (eg. for cohabiting) there would be ABSOLUTELY NO MONEY COMING IN AT ALL. At the present the Family Allowance is a small, but independent, statutory payment that cannot be denied by bumptious officials and can form a small sum to fall back on.

Another hidden feature of these proposals is that the credits are tied irrevocably to work, so the families of strikers would have, in the absence of strike pay, no income whatsoever. Until/unless they get supplementary benefit. With the present attitude of the Tories hardening every week against strikers, how much longer are they going to keep paying supplementary benefit to strikers' families? This proposal would thus have a very large part to play in breaking strikes, and this is one aspect of the Green Paper that has not been well-publicised at all.

What is needed is not merely campaigns to fight for 'fair deals for women'. What is needed is a campaign coordinating an attack on all the vicious proposals put forward by the Tory Government to hit hardest at the poorest families, the low wage earners, those unable to support themselves, the so-called 'lame ducks' of our society. This attack is intended to put more pressure on the lower paid, to drive the others to greater effort and greater docility by showing them the threat of WORKHOUSE treatment for the poor and unemployed. The Tories want to make all benefits payable by means test. In 1945 we won all the rights known together as the Welfare State. In the last 20 yrs. large parts have been dismantled and junked - the Tories want to finish this job. Our only means of defense is to attack them. Isolated protests by strikers, claimants, mothers, OAPs etc against the particular cruelties that effect each of them will achieve nothing.

The abolition of family allowances will effect mothers and therefore the women's and neighbourhood groups should be involved. It will effect claimants and the unemployed - so the Claimants Unions must be involved. The proposals will directly hurt the families of workers on strike - so every Union branch must add its weight and every factory organise itself to fight the implementation of the proposals.

There is a good chance that YOU, the reader, are a member of one of the groups mentioned above. Raise the matter at your group/branch meeting. Get your organisation to contact all the others to organise together. If you need any help with printing, speakers etc, write to the paper and we'll help as much as we can.

## TORIES CRIPPLE CHILDREN



THE LEGS OF A CHILD WITH RICKETS

Not very many people got really angry when Thatcher announced 'no more school milk', two years ago. This was probably because most of us thought that even the poorest were no longer so badly off that their kids needed the third of a pint of milk a day. Rickets, malnutrition, deficiency diseases, are all things of the past, the bad old days of the depression, thankfully eradicated by the Welfare State and the general increase in the standard of living.

In 1972 a survey of 600 Birmingham school children, aged between 14 and 17, showed that 25% of them had signs that they had rickets. A report in the British Medical Journal, on 10th February 1973 of 570 kids in a similar survey, revealed that 41% (nearly half) showed signs of rickets.

### WHAT IS RICKETS??

'Rickets' is a condition caused by lack of vitamin D in the diet. The vitamin is necessary for healthy bone formation. If a child does not get enough, the bones do not contain enough mineral salts, and are weak. The leg bones tend to bow apart under the weight of the body in severe cases. In less extreme cases, the results are less obvious, the children are simply stunted in growth, have weak muscles, aches and pains and general tiredness.

## PRIESTS DON'T GET PREGNANT

On Sunday 25th of March the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) had a 'day of mourning' for abortions. An estimated 50,000 of them marched through Manchester waving 'Abortion Kills' placards and wearing white flowers, which they dropped into dustbins as they finished their march. This was supposed to represent all the 'unborn babies' (for which read foetuses) killed in abortions. This collective hysteria prevailed throughout the march and had been scientifically whipped up by the speakers at the rally beforehand: Leo Abse, MP and alleged liberal, equated Harley Street surgeons with muggers and 'bombs exploding in Whitehall'. Jill Knight MP and Muggerside did their usual 'Abortion leads to Auschwitz' bit.

Some of the marchers carried pictures of foetuses - the psychology of which ought to be explained to them. Their hysteria nearly boiled over when they ran the gauntlet from a 400-strong counter demonstration organised by Manchester Women's Lib. Several of them spat, threw fag-ends and even punches at the counter-demonstrators, who were from political groups, women's lib groups and gay lib groups all over the North.

Counter demonstrators continually disrupted the march by walking into it carrying 'Abortion on Demand and Free Contraception' posters. Either the police or large heavies disguised as priests jostled them away each time.

As the SPUC march was a silent one (except for some kids out for a laugh) the impact of the slogans of the counter-demo was tremendous. A barrage of noise greeted each contingent - 'Women Should Decide Their Fate - Not the Church, not the State', 'Priests don't get Pregnant', etc.

The sad thing about the march was not the closed minds of the elderly religious fanatics or the insane Muggerside and Knight, or even the woman who pointed to the counter-demonstrators and told her son 'They hate you because they hate children', but the numbers of young people whose idealism and concern for life had been used for reactionary ends by this crowd of bigots.

For an expose of SPUC and the right-wing forces behind it, see the previous issue of Libertarian Struggle.



25p AN HOUR!!

# FIGHT AT FORTE'S

The catering industry is noted for two characteristics: high profits (up 35% in 1971) and lack of unionised labour and consequently low wages. Trust Houses Forte Ltd. is no exception.

At Gatwick Airport, THF Ltd hold a complete monopoly. Apart from actual airline tickets, they control every retail outlet, duty free shops, restaurants, bars, newspapers & stationery, snack bars. Most of the staff are young blokes at or just having left school, women and semi-retired people. There is the inevitable high staff turnover. THF are able to, and do, pay very low wages - as low as 25p for some kitchen porters working in temperatures of up to 120 degrees.

Only last summer, mutterings were made by some of the staff about the appalling working conditions and low wages.

There was no union representation so the T.G.W.U. were contacted and agreed to come down for a meeting. However the management tried to thwart the workers plan and called in the G.M.W.U. At a general meeting of the workers, a GMWU representative said that the GMWU had reached agreement with the T&G, and that the GMWU would be the sole union representing catering staff (most airport workers are members of the T.G.W.U.).

## HEALTH HAZARD

Fortunately this trick by the management and the GMWU failed and the T.G.W.U. moved in.

Since then, membership has been steadily growing. But not without casualties. Although the stores is manned most-

ly by young people (average age 19), it is the most militant section in THF at Gatwick. Early in January this year during a brief period when Heathrow was closed due to fog, air traffic was transferred to Gatwick. Gatwick is considered by many to be the best designed airport in Europe with air, road and rail all neatly linked. But no mention is made of the poor working conditions. The stores (THF) are located in the perimeter tunnel which runs under the main terminal building. No extractor fans are provided. Consequently during periods of heavy congestion (as happened during Heathrow shutdown) the tunnel is blocked with buses, coaches and service lorries. Engines are left running and the health hazards to the workers are tremendous.

## WALKOUT

Despite three days of constant demands for action, neither THF Ltd or the British Airports Authority were prepared to do anything. Things came to a head when two stores porters complained of dizziness, running eyes, & tightening of the chest. Still nothing was done and five of the seven porters walked off the job. Only then did the management act.

## HEAVY MOB

Since then there has been a 'shake-out' in the stores. An ex-army adjutant has been appointed assistant manager and life was made so unbearable that two porters have since left.

Coupled with this, there has been increased police harassment of workers, not only at the airport, but at the B.A.A. (British Airports Authority) run disco, where plain clothes police can be seen every Friday having what they describe as a 'quiet drink'.

The situation to date is that although union representation is still very weak, it is growing and it is hoped that the time will soon come when it will be strong enough to successfully challenge the big guns of Charlie Forte.



CATERING FOR HIGH PROFITS.....

REVIEW The Tyranny of Structurelessness by Jo Freeman. This is part of a pamphlet being produced by women in Leeds ORA. Obtainable soon from 29 Cardigan Road, Leeds 6. Please send 10p & 3p postage.

This pamphlet was originally produced by Jo Freeman in the debate on organisation within the American Women's Movement. First reprinted by the Berkeley Journal of Sociology and then by Agitprop in London. A new edition has just been produced by the Leeds ORA group.

It might seem strange that a pamphlet first produced in 1971 has been reprinted so often. The reason for its rapid reproduction is that its message applies to all struggles and its critique should not be assumed for the women's movement alone. The organisational conditions described in the pamphlet should be very familiar to many a structureless anarchist, claimant or student.

The pamphlet lucidly maps out the typical informal organisations that plague many of the 'new' movements and spells out clearly the only route by which they can travel. The path of political impotence. Jo Freeman rapidly debunks the myth that structurelessness is desirable or can even be obtained. She shows that so-called structureless groups quickly develop an implicit structure of a tyrannical nature - the structure of social cliques. She describes how these cliques control and guide informal groupings in a covert manner. Formal democracy being ignored with the grouping, the informal clique sets up its own 'membership qualification' according to 'friendship' or 'vibes' or 'tastes', etc. The pamphlet goes on to describe that dictatorship of informal elites is the only result of 'structurelessness'. The charismatic leadership comes into its own which is neatly labelled in the

# REVIEWS

pamphlet as the 'star' system of spokespersonship.

Only when EXPLICIT procedures are set down by a group for decision-taking doing work, group entry, etc, can a REAL libertarian structure come about. When all these procedures are widely known and practised in a group can real democracy and equality be said to exist. These procedures are listed in the pamphlet under the heading 'Principles of Democratic Structuring'. The list reads like the procedure that organised libertarians have stood by for years - delegation, rotation, allocation, diffusion of information, equal access to resources are a few of the principles listed.

Libertarians in all movements should study this pamphlet because it contains the core of the argument that ORGANISED libertarians have stated.

## ORA Publications

- ORA 1. Towards a History and Critique of the Anarchist Movement in Recent Times 5p plus post.
- ORA 2. Theory and Praxis in Anarchist Organisation. 3p plus post.
- ORA 3. The Bombthrowers: a study of terrorism. 10p plus post.
- ORA 4. Neither Washington nor Hanoi but Libertarian Socialism. 2p plus post.
- ORA 5. Introduction to Revolutionary Anarchism. 10p plus post.
- ORA 6. 1p plus 10p equals 10: Computer Ethics. 5p plus post.
- ORA 7. Bakunin - Essays on Revolution. 5p plus post.
- ORA 8. Free Speech and Social Revolution 5p plus post.

Available from 68a Chingford Road, London E.17.

LOCAL GROUP PUBLICATIONS  
Suppressed Report on the Derry Massacre 2p from North London group.  
Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. 10p from N.London group.  
Anarchism and Ecology. 10p from Leicester Revolution: Past and Present. 10p from Leeds group.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS & EVENTS

ORA CONFERENCE, GLASGOW, EASTER 1973. If you wish to attend as an observer, write to Glasgow group.



EUROPE'S LARGEST  
HOTEL, CATERING  
AND  
LEISURE GROUP

REVIEW The pill on trial by Paul Vaughan (Pelican 45p)

How safe are you? Does the Pill give you complete emancipation? Are you part of a mass experiment?

In this book, Paul Vaughan examines thoroughly the evidence for and against the Pill. He says in his preface that he has 'tried to set out, for the record, the nature of the medical argument over the Pill and its possible hazards'. No drug in history has caused so much controversy - it has enabled women to have some sexual freedom and to reconsider their ideas about marriage.

But at the same time, no-one really knows why it works. Also there are many side effects which can occur, and therefore it is as well to be forewarned.

This book is a helpful guide to those of us who like to know what we are swallowing.

## SNAKE



ALL THIS LOOSE CHAT  
ABOUT WORKER'S CONTROL!



ALL MY WORKERS  
ARE SENSIBLE MEN...



...THEY REJECT THE  
IDEA! I KNOW BECAUSE  
I'M IN CLOSE CONTACT..



...WITH MY WORKERS.



# WAGE FREEZE IN EDU- CATION

The NUS (National Union of Students) called for a National Day of Protest on March 14th. This was the end of their campaign to increase student grants.

## PRESENT GRANTS

The maximum present grant is £445 a year, but many students get less. Food, lodgings, and personal expenses have to be paid for out of this, as well as books. Grants for students at Polytechnics and Tech colleges are discretionary - ie, depend on the local authority feeling generous. The grant for married women is £275 a year, whether or not the husband is working. A married man is given an allowance for a wife and any kids. This obviously discourages married women from further education.

The grant awarded is worked out by a means test of the parents' joint income so that the grant paid by the local authority is added to what they reckon parents must contribute, to make the total eg. £445. The level at which parents contribute is so low that working class parents are earning between £25 a week, are supposed to pay £120 a year for their children's education. Many students do without this rather than let the family struggle to pay it all. Even middle class parents can find it difficult to pay, although they benefit from allowances for mortgage repayments, life insurances and other exemptions for property owners. It is not surprising that working class students are still few and far between; under the guise of providing grants for all, the education system still tends to favour the sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie.

## PROTEST ACTIONS

Although students in certain universities and colleges have shown militancy over issues concerning them - such as the sit-ins over the finding that Warwick University was keeping secret political and personal files on its students, involving local business interests in



deciding the policy of the University etc - no single issue has made so many students so militant. It is, after all, simply impossible to live on the grants as they are now.

Pressure from students has been increasing for some time. At the Nov. NUS conference last year, after initial opposition from the executive, a motion from University of Surrey Union calling for national coordinated rent strikes, catering boycotts, and demonstrations was passed unanimously. Since then there have been rent strikes at 46 Universities and Polytechnics, with catering boycotts and demonstrations at many others.

## GOVERNMENT REPLY

The NUS exec. met Norman St John Stevas (the Parliamentary Under Secretary in charge of fobbing off students), at the beginning of March, with the following demands:-

- (1) Abolition of discretionary awards so that all further education (A-level, HND, RNC etc) will get the same.
- (2) Full grants for all - married women to receive the same as others.
- (3) No means test contributions. Abolition of parental contributions so that all students get the same.
- (4) Restoration of grant to 1968 value (increase of £100 a year), with an annual review, (at present every 3 yrs), and future increases tied to the cost of living.

St John Stevas appealed to their sense of patriotism - the Dunkirk spirit etc) mentioned that there was a wage freeze on, and turned down their demands.

## THE NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

All but eight of all the Universities, Polys, tech colleges and other institutions of higher education in the country came out in protest.



HEAVILY PROTECTED BY POLICE - A HANDFUL OF FASCISTS MARCH IN HUDDERSFIELD

In their usual bid for respectability, the CP (Communist Party) refused to counter the fascists, except for a demonstration (160 people) one hour after the NF march. They refused to march with IS, not wanting to cause trouble and their demonstration attracted little attention, as it went out of its way to avoid any clash with the NF. The IS march was 400-strong was intent on 'fascist bashing' but without considering any of the tactics that would make it possible; considerations such as the presence of 500 foot police, 30 mounted police and the route of the NF march were ignored.

There was a short and futile scuffle with the police in an attempt to get to the NF, then the demonstration joined up with the CP had a short meeting and then dispersed.

At the present time when consensus pol-

## WHAT NEXT?

The students do not realise that they have to fight for a lot more than an increase in the grants. And many of them do not realise that their grants fight is in itself part of the fight against the freeze - another aspect of the constant war between the rich and privileged, and the millions who make the wealth. The battle for a decent income and the battle for free access to all the knowledge that society has, can and must, be linked.

New and welcome signs of militancy did appear on the Grants Day protest in Leeds, when students at an annexe of Park Lane College of Further Education had an occupation for the day. They were protesting not only at discretionary grants, but also about the Dickensian conditions in which they are forced to work, the right for an autonomous student union and against the victimisation of militant students at the college.

The occupation was highly successful and fully supported by the students there. Pickets manned every door and turned away lecturers who tried to get in, although most lecturers seemed sympathetic.

These signs of militancy among the section of the student population which has, up to now, been the most quiet, is very encouraging. The student 'revolution' has for a long time been the prerogative of the university elite. As the lower-paid have come to realise the necessity to match the militancy of highly-organised workers, so the 'lower student orders' have understood the need to organise (autonomy for student unions) and take militant action.

# LAPDOG LIES LOW

The Bradford University authorities are still trying to ban the distribution of the newsheet of the Bradford Black Anarchist group. The complicity of Bradford Students Union Executive (as reported in Libertarian Struggle-March) still continues. Pressure from students general meetings had forced the Union to unfreeze the funds of the anarchist group but the Executive of the Union now restricts the amount of cheap wholesale printing material for the publication of Bradford Black. The President of the Bradford Union has so far taken no action against the University authorities in order to fight the ban on Bradford Black which has now lasted two months.

The Anarchist group is still publishing its newsheet but is under continual harassment from the authorities. Representatives of the University seize copies whenever they are distributed. Members of the Bradford Anarchist Group have been intimidated and threatened when distribution occurs. A typical case of harassment happened in the Wardley Library where the University authorities pursued a distributor trying to force him out of the building while attempting to collect all of the copies that had been handed out. University personnel have quizzed bar staff for the names of people who have distributed the newsheet in the bar. Incidents of this nature occur every time the newsheet is published. And as a result of the University edit in January which forbade the production and distribution of Bradford Black on campus.

The President of the Union, Jeff Robinson, claims that unfreezing the Anarchist Group's funds (originally frozen by the Union Treasurer) and lending the free advice of the Union solicitor as 'adequate' support for one of the Union's societies. When asked to condemn the action of the University authority he said and did nothing.

Pressure is mounting to force the backward Bradford Union Executive into action. Letters from Leeds Student Union and Reading Area N.U. & condemning the Executive and asking for an explanation of the reluctance of the Exec to act have been sent to the Bradford President.

THE BRADFORD UNION EXEC MUST FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF THE ANARCHIST GROUP TO PUBLISH ITS NEWSHEET OR MAKE WAY FOR AN EXECUTIVE THAT WILL.

If you are a student, put down a motion at your next general meeting, calling for a telegram of condemnation of the failure of the present Bradford Executive to defend the rights of its members.

All enquiries for help and information contact Bradford Black, 30, Ebor Mount, Leeds 5.

# WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE.....

An interesting thing happened to two Lancaster claimants on their way home from the recent claimants conference in Newcastle. They were hitching on the road from Penrith in Cumbria, when a police car drew up. A porcine gentleman at the driving wheel asked them if they were anarchists. On receiving an affirmation, he told them that they'd have to hitch somewhere other than this particular stretch of the Queen's Highway. Apparently a local dignitary with the unlikely name of William Whitelaw owned a farm nearby, and for the sake of his peace and quiet, 'anarchists and suchlike' were not allowed within a radius of three miles of his pad.

# FASCISTS ALLOWED TO MARCH

On March 10th the National Front, a British neo-fascist organisation had an opportunity to present their ideas to the people of Huddersfield. Their march was held as a protest against the breakdown of law and order, and especially against terrorism. For this the Front was to have imported members of the Vanguard movement, but the only presence of these Northern Irish bigots on the weekly-attended march (150 demonstrators well spaced out) was one individual whistling 'Battle of the Boyne'.

The banners from far-flung NF branches nearly outnumbered the marchers carrying them. Yet again the NF has failed to organise a mass march. But they were allowed to make an effective presence on the anti-immigration platform they had to use, instead of the law and order one originally intended. The Front strolled through the centre of Huddersfield without meeting any protest from the left on the streets or on the pavement. The Front with their Union Jacks seemed to give the people of Huddersfield the illusion that they were respectable ex-servicemen concerned about immigration.

Despite the fact that the left far outnumbered the fascists, nothing was done by the Communist Party or the International Socialists to stop them handing out propaganda or to counter it with their own.

itics are breaking down, the right tactic for dealing with fascist groups is to stop their meeting and giving out propaganda. But this doesn't just happen, it has to be planned and organised. Fascists were driven off the streets by mass working class mobilisation in the thirties and again in the sixties. But we have to recognise that we may not always be successful and we must have good propaganda to show that we are defending attacks on the organised working class. The extreme right is still small and can be countered physically but if this changes, mindless fascist bashing could play into the hands of the law and order brigade.

The trouble with Huddersfield was that a ritual display of mock militancy against the Front allowed them to march through the town unchallenged. This fell between two footstools and achieved very little.





The last issue of Libertarian Struggle carried some of the criticisms which libertarian revolutionaries put forward of Lenin's ideas, and of the aims and methods of his followers. That article gave some idea why we oppose dictatorial organisations claiming to 'lead' the working class. The picture is unclear if we just leave it understood that we reject the queue of 'NEW leaderships' without explaining our attitude to the current political leadership of the working class. Which means explaining our attitude to parliamentary politics and the Labour Party.

For over 50 years the majority of class-conscious workers have looked to the Labour Party as their Party. An explanation of why the Labour Party has consistently betrayed their hopes can best be done by concentrating on two factors - first, the influences and limitations imposed on both British parliamentary democracy and the British Labour Party by the circumstances of their origins - second, the straitjacket imposed by the general principles of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary socialism.

The first assumption of parliamentary democracy, and those socialists who want to use Parliament for change, is that Parliament itself is a neutral institution, above the class struggle which takes place every day in society. By this light, if the working class can capture parliament it can use the powers of parliament in its interests as easily as the Tories use it in the interests of the ruling class. (This view is held by both the Labour Party and the Communist Party.) Why then have successive Labour governments (and in the past Communist MPs) made so little impression on the basic inequality and injustice of our society?

Parliaments do not descend from on high but have their roots in particular historical experience. As every schoolkid knows (although the political significance is, naturally, ignored) Parliament arose as the instrument of the rising capitalist class in its battles with the old

feudal aristocracy and the supreme power of the Crown. It rules in the name of the 'nation' (which seems normal to us but which was revolutionary when the most sacred myth of the time was the 'Divine Right of the King appointed by God'). It is not an institution designed to express the conflict in society but designed to absorb it and unify everything around this myth 'the nation'. But while it does this it still maintains the rule of the capitalist class. It does this not only by diverting working class interests in the name of the sacred national cow, but also because, as an institution created by and staffed by the privileged classes over the past 300 years, it has all the checks and balances inbuilt to prevent the machinery being used for new purposes (history is full of examples of Labour Chancellors being prisoners of the Treasury, Labour Foreign Secretaries stuck with reactionary Foreign Office staff who (a) advise the same course as always and (b) can smother anything else.)

So we can see by this brief description that, far from being a neutral weapon, Parliament is a fortress of the ruling class - putting out and reinforcing ideas that are in their interests, staffed by them or their servants. It is intricately built and a newcomer will not find the difficult and tortuous paths around it. If he asks the occupants to guide him he is their prisoner.

Let's now look at those who intend to take this castle on our behalf. The Labour Party is not a socialist party - it has never claimed to be. It is a party of the ruling class. It was created in 1918. At its birth it was made up of trade union leaders - who wanted parliamentary representatives to defend them against the more reactionary elements of the ruling class, and give them legal rights to carry on getting the best they could under capitalism. Fabian (ie, gradualist) socialists and other reformists (not revolutionaries); and some very small genuinely socialist groups. This pattern has been very important for the Party - the bulk of the strength has always come from the union bu-

reaucacy (money and nominal membership); the leadership has always been largely provided by the middleclass reformers - if going to Fion helps one become a Tory MP or Minister, then going to Oxford or Cambridge is equally necessary for most Labour MPs or Ministers; and the small number of 'lefts' remain to do any local donkey work and remain as powerless to affect Labour leaders as ever they have been.



So, the weight of the Party is always towards changing things within the context of capitalist society. To this extent it often plays the role of mouthpiece for the more modernising sections of the ruling class eg. the Wilson gov's pioneering of wages control, 'Fair' rents etc. Its most progressive measures have been in line with modernising capitalism in its own long term interests - even the great reforms of 1945 carried on in the tradition of forward-looking capitalism, represented best by the 1906 Liberal Government's introduction of pensions and unemployment benefits. The union bureaucracy and the middle class reformers are not interested in using parliament for working class interests. Their place in Parliament and in the Party expresses two things first their having 'made it' as part of the privileged elite of the country. In this they are not representatives of the working class (we certainly have not 'made it') but they are representatives of their social strata - the TU bureaucracy and the middle class intelligentsia.

The second thing that the Labour Party represents is a genuine desire to modernise the economy and to improve the general welfare BUT within the context of 'the nation's needs' NOT those of the working class - who are the first to be attacked when the 'nation' (ie. the needs of British capitalism) needs it.

While the capitalist system is in sufficient health - that is when its screwing enough profit out of every working class family - its able to grant a few reforms and the Labour Party is the tool which introduces them. When capitalism is gripped by crisis, as at present, and the glaring inequalities become such that many people become open to socialist ideas for a complete change THEN the Labour Party, far from taking the lead in the fight, sides with the established order, starts dishing out the 'national interest' muck. The only thing the Labour Party has got really upset about during this reactionary Tory government has been the 'loss of Sovereignty of our Queen' because 'we' joined the Common Market. The Labour Party betrayed the tenants over the Tory Rent Act, attacked the jailed dockers, and denounced the gasmen. One thing it won't do is fight the Tories.

We have already said that Parliament exists to smother rather than to voice working class interests. And this is true of the whole process of elections. If you compete in elections you must accept the rules. (And we know who made the rules.) If you accept that you must change society through Parliament you must first accept the defence of the whole election game, so that when you win (this year, next year, sometime, never) it all in a fit state to be used. So the 'lefts' act to divert all working class activity into the game. Don't strike or occupy - lobby your MPs. Don't refuse rent rises and organise your estate - trust your local Labour/Communist Councillor (or elect one). The game wants people only active enough to vote for the 'good guys' so that they have enough counters to play the game. Progress to socialism needs people organising and acting for themselves, so that day by day we get closer to the working class DIRECTLY exercising ITS OWN power over the whole of society.

Those of us in the socialist movement have been taught from birth or learnt through experience to hate the Tories. There is a strong emotional pull when the Labour Party thrashes them in election. But our role in the game then is just that of spectators. We've got to

play a whole new game, with our rules not theirs.

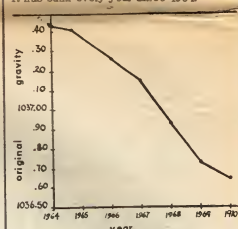
Those who want to divert us are at best mistaken, more usually they are self-seeking charlatans and renegades. Our job is to organise ourselves to destroy the ruling class and with it all its myths, all its servants and friends. Through our day to day direct action to make its fortress irrelevant. Its game obsolete. To cut off its sources of supply - our belief in it. To isolate it - by creating our own institutions REALLY under our control. When we're strong enough, to smash it to pieces.

## PLASTERED

Unscrupulous landlords have often watered down beer and prosecutions are still brought from time to time. The watering down of beers is, however, a method of adulteration that has become more sophisticated in recent years. Today it happens in the brewery rather than in the pub cellar.

For years the beer we drink has been getting weaker and most breweries do it - with one or two notable exceptions like Marston's of Burton and Youngs of Wandsworth. The duty payable on beer is calculated on Original Gravity. This is a measurement of the quantities of materials used in a brew and taken before fermentation. Most British beers have an OG of between 1030 and 1050. Basically OG measures the amount of sugar in a brew and therefore its alcoholic strength.

According to the official statistics from the Customs and Excise Department it has sunk every year since 1964.



These reductions may not look very big but the financial implications for the big breweries are staggering. If the beer consumed in 1970 had been brewed in 1964, the additional cost to the industry in excise duty would have been about £11 million.

That £11 million is really a hidden price increase because the breweries don't reduce their price when they weaken the brew. It is often the biggest breweries that are to blame and often the biggest reductions of OG are made in those beers which are most popular - therefore maximising profits.

For example Watneys Special Bitter had an OG of 1043.1 in 1960. This was reduced to 1036 by 1972 - a savings on excise duty of £3.08 a barrel (36 gallons). Worthington E has come down in strength to save £2.20 a barrel. Sales of one of the top brands can exceed 500,000 barrels a year.

Reduced beer strength has helped to boost brewery profits. Last year profits for Allied Breweries leapt £12m to £53.6m. The other giant Watney Mann had profits of £17.1m in 1971 with a forecast of £28.5 last year.

(Extracts from the Campaign for the Revitalisation of the Journal, printed in Manchester Free Press)

Published by ORA, from 29, Cordonig Rd, Leeds 6, Printed by Anyway Litton, 252 Brinsford Rd, London S.W.13, BAC Tel 01-274 2431

## FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

**MOLE EXPRESS** Manchester voice of revolutionary struggle. News/reviews/exposes/graphics/features. 10p. monthly from 7, Summer Terrace, Manchester 14 SWD.

**INSIDE STORY** the radical magazine which specialises in the stories Fleet St. won't print. For sample copy send 25p. to Dept. AP20, 3 Belmont Road, London SW4.

**BLACK AND RED OUTLOOK** monthly paper of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance. Sub. £1 for 10 copies. A. Roberts, 118, Albert Ave Prestwich, Lancs.

**LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION** magazine. Copies 10p. from 1, Wilne Street, Leicester.

**TRIAD** a beautifully produced magazine, designed as an introduction to anarchist ideas. 10p plus post from Whyte, 138, Fergus Drive, Glasgow, NW.

**SOLIDARITY** a paper for militants in industry and elsewhere. 6p plus post from 27, Sandringham Road, London NW11.

**Y-FRONT** a paper for schoolkids by schoolkids. send 10p to 183, North Gower St., London NW1.

**FRONT LIBERTAIRE** fortnightly paper of ORA France. Sample copy from N. London group, subscription details from 33 rue des Vignoles, 75020 Paris, France

**MOVEMENT** guide to latest books, pamphlets, groups, laws. 5p from 14 Hanley Rd, London N.4.

**FREEDOM** weekly paper of the Freedom Press Group. 5p for a sample copy from 84b Whitechapel High St., London E.1.

**POINT BLANK** unusually coherent situationist group, in the USA. Details/info from N. London ORA.

**DE VRIJE SOCIALIST** paper of the Dutch Libertarian Socialist Federation. For copies write to Jan Bervoets, willems de zuigerlaan 104, Den Haag, Netherlands

